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SATURDAY ▸ MAY 16, 2026 ▸ VOL: 11 ▸ ISSUE: 301 ▸ PAGES 12 ▸ ₹2.00

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# INDIA, UAE deepen ties with defence, energy and AI agreements

Officials said the agreement would strengthen India's energy security amid Gulf tensions, oil volatility

**ABU DHABI**

India and the United Arab Emirates on Friday strengthened their strategic partnership by signing a series of major agreements covering defence, energy security, artificial intelligence, ship repair and investment during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Gulf nation.

Prime Minister Modi held talks with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan amid growing instability in West Asia and rising concerns over global energy supplies.

The two countries agreed on a framework for a strategic defence partnership aimed at boosting defence manufacturing collaboration, technology sharing, innovation and regional security cooperation. The agreement is expected to strengthen long-term military and industrial ties between the two nations.

India and the UAE also signed agreements related to strategic petroleum reserves and long-term supply of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Officials said the pact would help India strengthen energy security at a time when global oil markets remain volatile due to tensions in the Gulf region and disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz crisis.

The agreements also include plans for setting up a ship repair cluster in Gujarat's Vadinar region and cooperation in maritime skill development. Officials said the project would support India's "Make in India" initiative and strengthen coastal infrastructure.

Another major outcome was the proposal to establish a supercomputer cluster to boost India's artificial intelligence capabilities and digital infrastructure.

The UAE additionally announced an investment commitment of nearly USD 5 billion aimed at expanding economic opportunities and generating employment.

The agreements come at a time when both countries are seeking stronger economic and strategic cooperation amid growing geopolitical uncertainty in West Asia.

**"Concluding a short but highly productive visit to the UAE. I am confident that the outcomes of this visit will further strengthen our friendship and contribute to growth and prosperity."** —Narendra Modi, PM

## INDIA, UAE BOOST STRATEGIC TIES

**Defence pact**
- Strategic defence partnership framework signed

**Energy security**
- LPG supply and petroleum reserve agreements

**Infrastructure**
- Ship repair cluster planned at Vadinar, Gujarat

**Technology**
- Supercomputer cluster to support India's AI ambitions

**Investment**
- UAE commits nearly USD 5 billion investment

**Skill development**
- Cooperation in ship repair training programmes

# CM defends dress code, slams BJP over NEET controversy

**Karnataka Chief Minister accuses BJP of hypocrisy on dress code and silence over NEET paper leak affecting lakhs of students.**

"Educational institutions must promote equality, dignity, fraternity and secular values."
—Siddaramaiah, Karnataka Chief Minister

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday strongly defended the State government's revised dress code policy in educational institutions, stating that it was based on the constitutional principle of equal respect for all religions. At the same time, he launched a sharp attack on the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the NEET examination controversy and alleged paper leak.

In a detailed press statement, Siddaramaiah said the revised dress code implemented in schools and colleges allows limited traditional and faith-based symbols as long as they remain compatible with prescribed uniforms and do not disturb discipline or the secular character of institutions.

The Chief Minister accused BJP leaders of creating communal tensions in the past over issues like hijab and sacred threads while remaining silent on the cancellation of the NEET examination, which has impacted lakhs of students across the country.

"Can they not see the tears of students who are crying because of the cancellation of the NEET examination?" Siddaramaiah questioned.

He alleged that while BJP leaders protested aggressively over minor lapses in Karnataka's CET examinations, they have failed to speak out despite serious allegations surrounding the NEET paper leak. Siddaramaiah further held the Union Government responsible for undermining Karnataka's education system by imposing NEET.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the CET system introduced by previous Congress governments had enabled thousands of poor and rural students to pursue professional education. He claimed the NEET system has disadvantaged such students and weakened the State's authority over education. Siddaramaiah also demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and called on Prime Minister Modi to apologise to students affected by the controversy.

## CM SLAMS FUEL PRICE HIKE

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday strongly criticised the Centre over the latest petrol and diesel price hike, warning that it would severely affect common people and trigger inflation in daily essentials. Speaking in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah said the increase in fuel prices after Assembly elections was "expected" and accused the BJP-led Centre of repeatedly burdening citizens through rising fuel costs since Narendra Modi assumed office.

# DCM Targets BJP, Modi and HDK over SIR, Fuel Hike & Bidadi Row

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Friday launched a multi-pronged attack on the BJP-led Centre, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy over issues ranging from the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to fuel price hikes and the controversial Bidadi township project.

"How can ordinary people stop using vehicles or reduce essential fuel consumption?" DK Shivakumar Dy CM

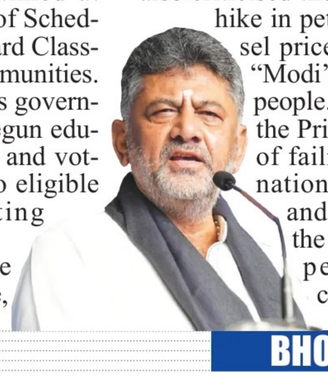
Addressing reporters in Bengaluru, Shivakumar alleged that the SIR exercise initiated by the Election Commission was aimed at removing the votes of Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and minority communities. He said the Congress government had already begun educating party leaders and voters to ensure that no eligible citizen loses voting rights.

"Its aim is to see that Scheduled Caste, backward class and minority votes are cut. But we will ensure that they are protected," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister also criticised the ₹3 per litre hike in petrol and diesel prices, calling it "Modi's gift" to the people. He accused the Prime Minister of failing in international relations and questioned the Centre's appeal urging citizens to reduce fuel use and postpone gold purchases amid the West Asia crisis.

Shivakumar further hit out at Kumaraswamy over his criticism of the proposed Bidadi township project. He questioned why the JD(S) leader had not de-notified the land when he himself served as Chief Minister.

The Deputy Chief Minister defended the project, saying it would benefit future generations despite opposition from sections of farmers in Ramanagara district.



**Fuel Price Hike Criticism**

Dy CM termed the latest petrol and diesel price increase as a result of the Centre's failed foreign policy and worsening global relations. He also criticised suggestions made by the PM asking citizens to limit fuel usage and postpone gold purchases, calling them impractical for ordinary families.

**Bidadi Township Controversy**

The Bidadi township project has sparked protests from sections of farmers. Shivakumar defended the proposal and claimed Kumaraswamy was criticising the project only for political reasons, despite the initiative originating during the JD(S) leader's tenure as Chief Minister.

# Petrol, diesel prices raised by ₹3 amid West Asia crisis

**NEW DELHI**

Oil marketing companies on Friday increased petrol and diesel prices by ₹3 per litre across all variants, citing mounting supply and pricing pressures triggered by the ongoing West Asia conflict.

The hike applies to both regular and premium fuel variants and marks the first major increase in retail fuel prices since 2022. In Delhi, the price of regular petrol has risen to ₹97.77 per litre from ₹94.77, while diesel now costs ₹90.67 per litre, up from ₹87.67.

Fuel prices witnessed steeper increases in some metro cities. In Kolkata, petrol rose to ₹108.74 per litre, while diesel climbed to ₹95.13. In Mumbai, petrol is now priced at ₹106.68 and diesel at ₹93.14 per litre. The increase comes amid rising global crude oil prices and growing concerns over losses faced by oil marketing companies (OMCs).

- **FUEL HIKE:** ₹3 per litre on petrol and diesel
- **DELHI PETROL PRICE:** ₹97.77 per litre
- **DELHI DIESEL PRICE:** ₹90.67 per litre
- **MAIN REASON:** West Asia conflict and rising crude prices
- **OMC LOSSES:** Around ₹1,000 crore per day
- **LAST MAJOR HIKE:** April 2022 during Russia-Ukraine conflict

## Fuel hike hits commuters hard

**BENGALURU** : The sharp increase in petrol and diesel prices has triggered widespread concern among commuters, delivery workers, transport operators and middle-class families across Bengaluru. Petrol prices in the city crossed ₹106 per litre, while diesel prices rose above ₹94 per litre. Many citizens said the increase would directly affect household budgets, daily travel expenses and transportation costs.

# SC says Darshan can seek bail if Renukaswamy trial delays continue

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday observed that Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa may seek bail in the Renukaswamy murder case if there is no substantial progress in the trial within one year.A bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Vijay Bishnoi directed the Karnataka government to ensure that 60 key witnesses in the case are examined within a year. The court also asked prison authorities to provide Darshan with all basic amenities as per jail rules.The apex court noted that although charges were framed in November 2025, only 10 witnesses had been examined over the last 7 months.

**BHOJSHALA TEMPLE VERDICT**

# *MP HC declares Bhojshala a Saraswati Temple*

The Bhojshala dispute has remained one of Madhya Pradesh's most sensitive religious issues for decades. Hindu groups claim the site was originally a Saraswati temple established by King Bhoj in the 11th century, while Muslims have offered prayers there as the Kamal Maula Mosque. In 2003, the ASI allowed Hindus and Muslims to use the complex on different days under regulated arrangements. However, Hindu organisations challenged the order, demanding unrestricted worship rights and restoration of the temple's original status. The Supreme Court had earlier ordered maintenance of status quo while permitting an ASI survey of the site.

**BHOPAL**

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday ruled that the disputed Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar district is a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati and quashed a 2003 order of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) that had allowed Muslim prayers at the site.

A division bench comprising Justices Vijay Kumar Shukla and Alok Awasthi held that the religious character of the disputed structure was that of Bhojshala, a historic centre of Sanskrit learning associated with Goddess Saraswati worship.

The court said the ASI order restricting Hindu worship rights and permitting namaz within the complex could not continue.

The bench observed that members of the Muslim community may seek alternative land from the state government for construction of a mosque in Dhar district.

The court relied on archaeological findings, ASI reports, historical records and principles laid down in the Ayodhya verdict while delivering the judgment.

According to the court, historical literature and archaeological evidence strongly indicated the existence of a Saraswati temple at the site.

The ASI's 2024 survey report had also stated that several parts of the present structure appeared to be constructed using remains of earlier temples, including decorated pillars and mutilated deity sculptures.

# NEET to go fully computer-based from next year, says Pradhan

**NEW DELHI**

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday announced that the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) will be conducted in Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode from next year following the latest paper leak controversy.

Addressing a press conference, Pradhan said the NEET re-examination will be held on June 21 and assured students that the government would take strict measures to prevent malpractice in future examinations.

"Our topmost priority is the future of the students. We will not let malpractice happen this time," Pradhan said.

The minister admitted that examination questions had circulated under the guise of "guess papers," prompting the government to cancel the examination after verification between May 8 and May 11. He said the decision was taken to protect deserving students from losing opportunities because of "education mafias."

Pradhan said the Centre had adopted a zero-tolerance approach towards examination irregularities and handed over the case to the CBI. He added that no one involved in the leak, whether inside or outside the National Testing Agency (NTA), would be spared.

The minister also announced relief measures for candidates appearing in the re-examination. Students will receive refunds of previously paid examination fees, while the upcoming NEET retest will be conducted free of cost.

To reduce inconvenience, candidates will be allowed to reselect their preferred exam cities, and the duration of the examination will be extended by 15 minutes.

# Southwest monsoon likely to reach Kerala on May 26

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday said the southwest monsoon is likely to arrive in Kerala on May 26 as rainfall activity intensifies across the State. IMD issued an orange alert for Idukki and Malappuram districts, warning of very heavy rainfall between 115 mm and 204 mm within 24 hours. Yellow alerts were also sounded in several other districts, including Kollam, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kozhikode. According to the IMD, favourable conditions are developing over the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea for the monsoon's advancement. A low-pressure area over the southwest Bay of Bengal is expected to strengthen rainfall activity in Kerala over the coming days.

QUICK READ

## 47 live animals seized from passenger's baggage

**CH NEWS** BENGALURU
Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport seized 47 live animals from the baggage of a passenger who arrived from Bangkok. According to officials, the recovered species included red-footed tortoises, African spurred tortoises, Argentine black-and-white tegus and Goeldi's marmosets. Authorities said several of the animals are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which regulates international trade in protected species. A case has been registered under the Customs Act, 1962.

## Woman pushed into drain during parking dispute

**CH NEWS** BENGALURU
Police have launched a search for a motorist accused of pushing a homemaker into a drain during a parking dispute near an ice-cream parlour on Platform Road in Sheshadripuram. According to the complaint filed by G. Chandrahasa, a resident of MC Layout in Vijayanagar, the altercation began when he was parking his car and it accidentally brushed against a parked two-wheeler. During the argument, the unidentified motorist allegedly pushed Chandrahasa's wife, Gangamma R., into a nearby drain, causing a fracture to her right hand. Police said CCTV footage from the area has been collected and further investigation is underway.

## Robotic technology helps BWSSB avoid road digging at 399 locations

**BENGALURU**
The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has reported significant success in using advanced robotic technology to detect faults in underground pipelines and sewer networks, helping authorities avoid road excavation at 399 locations across the city over the last six months.The technology, introduced in November last year by Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, is aimed at reducing traffic disruption and improving maintenance efficiency in Bengaluru's densely packed urban areas.According to the Water Board, robotic devices equipped with cameras and inspection systems travelled a total distance of 32,661 metres, or nearly 32.66 kilometres.

# Karnataka takes climate fight to grassroots with panchayat-level action plans

Marking a significant shift in India's climate governance journey, Karnataka is attempting to take the battle against climate change right down to village streets and farm fields.

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, Karnataka is preparing individual climate action plans for all 5,994 gram panchayats and 340 urban local bodies, aiming to institutionalise climate accountability at the grassroots level.The ambitious exercise, currently under development, could make Karnataka the first state in India to create climate-specific governance frameworks for every village and urban local body.Speaking at a sustainability conclave organised by the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Bengaluru, T. Mahesh, Director of the Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI), said the initiative seeks to transform every gram panchayat into a unit of climate action."Karnataka's ambition is to make every gram panchayat a unit of climate accountability, where a farmer in Bidar and a panchayat leader in Kodagu both understand and act on their role in India's net-zero journey," Mahesh said.Following the revision of its State Climate Action Plan in 2024 to align with India's commitments under the Paris Agreement, Karnataka is now monitoring 105 climate targets across 15 departments,

including agriculture, energy, rural development and urban development.Officials said the targets for the 2025–2030 period are being reviewed every month by an apex committee headed by the Chief Secretary.The proposed village-level plans are expected to focus on water-use efficiency, drought-resistant crops, millet cultivation, agroforestry, energy conservation and local plantation drives. Karnataka has already set a target of planting five crore saplings across wastelands, farmlands and canal-side areas.The state has also crossed the 50 per cent mark in renewable energy generation through expanding solar and wind power capacity.

Training programmes involving government officials, academic institutions and industry groups are already underway to prepare local bodies for implementation.

A research report jointly released by the BCIC and the SDM Institute for Management Development highlighted that sustainability measures such as recycling, reducing construction waste and limiting plastic use are increasingly becoming economically beneficial for businesses alongside environmental gains.

## Garbage menace chokes Brigade Road, traders fear impact on business

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Bengaluru's iconic Brigade Road, one of the city's busiest commercial and shopping destinations, is battling an escalating garbage problem that traders say is driving away customers and damaging the area's image.Located near the M. G. Road Metro Station, Brigade Road is home to nearly 125 stores and attracts thousands of visitors daily. However, traders claim heaps of garbage, plastic waste, rotting food and discarded packaging have remained uncleared for weeks, creating unhygienic conditions in the heart of the city.At least three garbage black spots have emerged beneath electrical transformers — two along the main road and another inside a lane.

## 2 held for sexually abusing orphaned girls, sharing videos online

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Two men have been arrested for allegedly sexually abusing two orphaned minor girls for over a year, recording the acts on mobile phones and uploading the videos on social media platforms for monetary gain.

The arrests were made by the Cyber Command Centre (CCC) following an alert received through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP). Police said this is among the first recent cases in Karnataka where accused persons involved in recording and circulating child sexual abuse content were traced and arrested through cyber surveillance. The accused have been identified as Kiran Kumar Nayak (29), a cattle grazer from Kaidallipalya near Kaggalipura, and M.K. Aditya (20), a swimming pool maintenance worker from Channapatna. Police recovered three mobile phones allegedly containing incriminating videos.

According to investigators, the victims are girls aged 11 and 12 from a farmer's family in Ramanagara district. Their mother had died several years ago, while their father, reportedly an alcoholic, passed away two years ago, leaving the children orphaned.Police said the girls had since been living with their uncle, who was allegedly acquainted with one of the accused. Investigators suspect the uncle accepted money from the accused persons and allowed them access to the children.Officials said the girls were allegedly subjected to repeated sexual abuse over the past year.Pronab Mohanty said a case has been registered at Kaggalipura Police Station and statements of the victims have been recorded.

# Cong wary of voter exclusions as K'taka gears up for SIR exercise

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, scheduled to begin in Karnataka on June 20, has triggered concern within the Congress party, with leaders fearing exclusion of sections of its traditional support base from the revised voter list.

Sources said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and senior Congress leaders have discussed apprehensions over possible exclusion of minorities, migrant populations and economically weaker sections during the verification process.

The month-long door-to-door exercise by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) is expected to cover nearly 5.5 crore voters across Karnataka.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the party was closely monitoring the process in light of developments witnessed in other states.

"There are apprehensions after what happened in West Bengal. Many people were allegedly deprived of their voting rights due to confusion during the revision process," Rao said, adding that proper procedures and safeguards were necessary to ensure eligible voters were not left out.

Rao also referred to Assam, alleging that minority voters there had faced disadvantages due to gerrymandering and electoral changes.

Congress spokesperson Brijesh Kalappa said the party had intensified booth-level vigilance and planned awareness drives among vulnerable communities.

"We anticipate certain communities may be impacted. Voters will be educated and monitored closely during the process," he said.

BJP State President B. Y. Vijayendra accused Congress of opposing the SIR exercise for political reasons, while BJP MLC N. Ravikumar said the process would help clean electoral rolls by removing duplicate and deceased voters.

Rizwan Arshad said awareness campaigns would be launched in minority-dominated areas to ensure no eligible voter was disenfranchised. Congress MLC H. A. Iqbal Hussain said the party would train BLA-2 workers to monitor the exercise alongside BLOs.

**The month-long door-to-door voter verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will formally begin on June 30 and cover an estimated 5.5 crore voters across the state.**

Congress leaders are also concerned that migrant workers in urban areas such as Bengaluru, Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru may face documentation-related confusion during verification.

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge said the party supported identifying genuine voters but questioned the implementation process.

"SIR should not merely mean deleting names, but ensuring a genuine and fair voter list," he said.

## HC STAYS FSSAI ADVISORY RESTRICTING USE OF ASHWAGANDHA LEAVES

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has granted an interim stay on an advisory issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) restricting the use of Ashwagandha leaves and their extracts in food products.The interim order was passed by a single-judge bench of Justice S.R. Krishnakumar while hearing petitions filed by Sami-Sabinsa Group Limited and Kerry Inc challenging the advisory.The court directed the Union Government and the concerned authorities to file objections and adjourned the matter to June 8. It clarified that the interim relief would apply only to the petitioner companies until the next hearing.The disputed advisory, issued on April 16, 2026, followed concerns raised by the Union Ministry of AYUSH regarding possible adverse health effects linked to the use of Ashwagandha leaves.

During the hearing, counsel for the petitioners argued that

the companies had been manufacturing Ashwagandha-based products for nearly three decades through licensed contract manufacturers and that no major safety concerns had emerged so far.

The petitioners contended that Ashwagandha products were being manufactured in accordance with standards prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals and Functional Foods) Regulations, 2016, framed under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.They further argued that the FSSAI could not prohibit the use of Ashwagandha leaves through a mere advisory without formally amending the existing regulations.According to the petitioners, the advisory would severely affect production, exports and business operations, leading to substantial financial losses.The Union Ministry of AYUSH had earlier expressed concern that Ashwagandha leaves contain high levels of "withaferin-A", a compound reportedly associated with liver toxicity, gastrointestinal distress and adverse effects on the nervous system. Based on these concerns, authorities issued the advisory cautioning against the use of Ashwagandha leaves and extracts in food products.Following arguments from both sides, the High Court granted interim protection to the petitioner companies pending further hearing of the matter.

## Dr Sharanprakash Patil to address media on medical education dvpts

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Dr. Sharanprakash R. Patil, Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Livelihood and Raichur District In-charge, will address a press conference on Saturday at Vikas Soudha, Bengaluru, regarding recent important developments in the Department of Medical Education. The briefing is scheduled to begin at 12 noon in Room No. 206 on the second floor.

The Minister is expected to highlight key policy updates, ongoing initiatives, and future plans aimed at strengthening medical education infrastructure and skill development programmes across Karnataka. Senior officials from the department are also likely to be present during the interaction. Members of the media, including reporters, photographers and video journalists, have been cordially invited to attend the briefing.

## SENDOFF CEREMONY

Karnataka Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan bids farewell to Haj pilgrims during a send-off programme. Maheshwarananda Swamiji, Minister R. B. Timmapur, former minister Naseer Ahmed, Slum Board Chairman Abbayya Prasad and Haj Committee members were present.

## HAL police exhume body, reopen probe into suspicious death

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The HAL police have exhumed the body of a 40-year-old man and reopened investigations into his death following allegations of foul play raised by his family members.

Police said the action was initiated after Younes lodged a complaint expressing suspicion over the death of his brother, Imtiaz, who died at his residence on March 28.

According to officials, Imtiaz's wife, Nasirabhanu, had informed relatives that he suffered a heart attack.

RELIEF FOR TV DIRECTOR

## *HC stays case against TV director T N Seetharam*

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has granted interim relief to noted television director T. N. Seetharam and others by staying criminal proceedings initiated against them in connection with a land dispute case in Doddaballapur taluk.A vacation single-judge bench of Justice M.G.S. Kamal passed the interim order while hearing a criminal petition filed by Seetharam and his sister K. S. Vijayalakshmi seeking quashing of the FIR registered at the Doddaballapur Rural Police Station.During the hearing, counsel for the petitioners argued that the allegations made in the complaint were false and arose out of an ongoing property dispute. The lawyer submitted that Seetharam, a well-known television personality and legal professional, had been wrongly implicated in the case and sought an immediate stay on further proceedings.Opposing the plea, counsel representing the complainant argued that the investigation was still at a preliminary stage and that granting a stay would obstruct a proper probe into the allegations.After hearing both sides, the bench ordered an interim stay on the FIR and related proceedings against Seetharam and the other accused.The dispute pertains to over five acres of land spread across different survey numbers in Hasanaghatta village of Doddaballapur taluk. Complainant M.A. Aravind Kumar alleged that despite the land being sold and in his possession, Seetharam and others entered the disputed property on May 1 along with a large group of people.

The complaint alleged that the accused demolished a compound wall, damaged CCTV cameras and assaulted workers present at the site. Serious allegations, including outraging the modesty of women and physical assault, were also levelled in the FIR.

## New bi-weekly express train between B'luru and Mumbai from May 23

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Rail passengers travelling between Bengaluru and Mumbai will soon get an additional direct train service, with the Railways introducing a new bi-weekly express train from May 23.

The Ministry of Railways has approved Train No. 16553/16554 — the SMVT Bengaluru–Lokmanya Tilak Terminus Bi-weekly Express — offering another direct rail link between the country's technology and financial hubs alongside the existing Udyaan Express.

The inaugural journey from Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal in Byappanahalli will commence on May 23, while the first service from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus in Mumbai will depart the following day.

According to railway officials, the train will leave Bengaluru at 8.35 pm every Tuesday and Saturday and reach Mumbai at 8.40 pm the next day. The return service from Mumbai will depart at 11.15 pm on Sundays and Wednesdays and arrive in Bengaluru at 10.30 pm.

En route, the train will halt at Sampige Road, Davanagere, Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi, Miraj, Sangli, Karad, Satara, Lonand, Pune, Lonavala, Karjat, Kalyan and Thane.

Railway experts said the new service is expected to reduce overcrowding on the popular Udyaan Express on at least two days each week, though it may not significantly reduce travel time as the journey still takes over 23 hours.

QUICK READ

## ED raids Games Craft in online gaming fraud case

**CH NEWS** BENGALURU- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized movable assets worth ₹526 crore after conducting raids at 17 locations in Bengaluru and Delhi linked to Games Craft Technology in an alleged online gaming fraud case. Officials said the searches were carried out at company premises and residences of directors. Three persons connected to the company were recently arrested as part of the investigation. According to the ED, assets worth ₹526.49 crore were seized, including 2.5 kg of gold, diamond jewellery valued at₹3.5 crore and ₹11 lakh in cash. Investigators alleged that users lost nearly ₹1,154 crore while playing online rummy games against bots on the platform.

## CCB raids prostitution racket in rented houses, two held

**CH NEWS** BENGALURU The City Crime Branch (CCB) police busted an alleged prostitution racket operating from rented houses in Bengaluru and arrested two women in connection with the case. Raids were conducted under the limits of Soladevanahalli and Byadarahalli police stations following specific information received by the CCB Women Protection Unit about illegal activities in the outskirts of the city. Police said three women were rescued during the operation. According to investigators, the accused had rented houses in less crowded localities and were allegedly running prostitution activities discreetly to avoid suspicion.

## Man crushed to death by gas tanker

**CH NEWS** BENGALURU A 30-year-old man was killed after a gas tanker allegedly ran over him while he was sleeping inside a petrol pump premises near Kulumepalya in Nelamangala taluk. The deceased was identified as Shivshankar Sahu, a native of Chhattisgarh. Police said the incident occurred at an Indian Oil Corporation petrol bunk where Sahu had reportedly been sleeping. Officials suspect negligence on the part of the tanker driver led to the fatal accident. After the incident, the driver allegedly fled the spot along with the vehicle. Police said CCTV cameras installed at the petrol pump captured visuals of the accident. A case has been registered at Nelamangala Rural Police Station, and efforts are underway to trace the absconding driver and tanker.

# Bengaluru plans HOV lanes on ORR to ease mounting traffic congestion

Traffic Police are planning dedicated HOV lanes on Outer Ring Road for vehicles carrying three or more passengers. The move aims to reduce congestion, encourage carpooling, and improve travel time

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

In a significant move to tackle Bengaluru's worsening traffic crisis, the Bengaluru Traffic Police are planning to introduce High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along the city's heavily congested Outer Ring Road (ORR).

The proposal, currently under discussion with multiple stakeholders, including corporate associations located along the ORR corridor, is aimed at promoting shared mobility and reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles during peak hours.

Senior officials from the Bengaluru Traffic Police, the Greater Bengaluru Authority and the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) recently held meetings to deliberate on the feasibility and implementation of the dedicated lanes.

Under the proposed system, only vehicles carrying three or more passengers will be permitted to use the HOV lane. Eligible vehicles are expected to include private cars, vans, mini-buses, auto-rickshaws and BMTC buses.

Traffic authorities believe the initiative could significantly improve vehicle movement on the ORR stretch, especially during office rush hours when traffic bottlenecks

routinely bring movement to a crawl.Officials said the idea draws inspiration from the earlier Bus Priority Lane system that operated successfully on the same corridor before metro construction intensified.

During the bus lane experiment, BMTC buses were given exclusive lanes, enabling commuters to reach destinations nearly 15 minutes faster. The initiative had received positive feedback from office-goers and public transport users.However, the dedicated bus lane system was eventually suspended because of extensive metro construction work being undertaken by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) along the ORR corridor.With a major portion of metro-related civil works nearing completion, authorities are now exploring the possibility of reintroducing dedicated traffic lanes in the form of HOV corridors.

> Officials said pilot implementation of HOV lanes may initially begin on select stretches of the Outer Ring Road after consultations and final approvals. Authorities are also expected to study enforcement mechanisms and commuter response before expanding the project citywide.

Traffic experts believe encouraging carpooling and shared transport could help reduce traffic volume, lower fuel consumption and decrease carbon emissions in one of Bengaluru's busiest transport corridors.

## NSG-led mock drill held at KSR Bengaluru station

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

A large-scale high-intensity mock security drill was successfully conducted at KSR Bengaluru Railway Station under the leadership of the National Security Guard in coordination with railway and police authorities.According to a release issued by South Western Railway, the exercise was aimed at testing preparedness against complex security threats, including possible hijack and hostage-like situations within the railway station premises.The multi-agency drill involved the Railway Protection Force (RPF), Government Railway Police (GRP), Garuda Special Force and Karnataka State Police. Special assault drills, building clearance operations, passenger evacuation exercises and platform security management were carried out during the simulation.

## BESCOM tariff hike adds to rising cost burden on consumers

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Consumers across Karnataka are facing fresh financial pressure following a series of hikes in electricity, milk, fuel and liquor prices, raising concerns over the growing cost of living for middle and lower-income families.Electricity users under Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) and Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) will now have to pay higher tariffs after revised rates came into effect. BESCOM has increased electricity charges by 56 paise per unit, while CESC consumers will see a rise of 15 paise per unit.However, a few regions received limited relief. Mangalore Electricity Supply Company (MESCOM) reduced tariffs by 9 paise per unit, while both JESCOM and HESCOM announced reductions of 10 paise per unit. HRECS also reduced rates by ₹1.55 per unit.Adding to household concerns, milk prices have increased across the country after Amul raised prices by ₹2 per litre. The revised prices came into effect from Thursday, impacting daily expenses for families already struggling with inflation.The Karnataka government has also revised liquor prices, with several popular brands witnessing steep hikes of nearly 20 percent. The prices of commonly consumed brands such as MC Brandy and DSP Black increased from ₹185 to ₹215 for 180 ml bottles, while 8PM Whisky and Bagpiper rose from ₹135 to ₹165. Old Tavern, Silver Cup and Original Choice also recorded major increases.

# GBA elections likely to be delayed amid SIR process

**The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls across Karnataka may delay the much-awaited Greater Bengaluru Authority elections, as officials struggle with staff shortages and overlapping election duties.**

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Uncertainty looms over the conduct of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections as the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is likely to delay the poll process in Karnataka. Sources in the administration said the State government and the State Election Commission are considering seeking additional time from the Supreme Court, which had reportedly fixed June 30 as the deadline for conducting the elections.

Officials said the large-scale voter verification exercise announced by the Election Commission of India has created logistical and manpower challenges, making it difficult to hold the GBA elections within the stipulated timeline. Karnataka is among the 16 states selected for the SIR exercise, which will continue for several months.

According to officials, the government has cited shortage of administrative personnel and election staff as the key reason behind the likely request for an extension. A large number of officials, including Booth Level Officers (BLOs), revenue staff and local administration personnel, will be engaged in the voter list revision process across the state.

Preparatory activities for the SIR process are scheduled between June 20 and June 29, during which training programmes for BLOs and election staff will be conducted. From June 30 to July 29, door-to-door voter verification will take place across Karnataka to update and verify electoral rolls.

A draft revised voter list is expected to be published on

August 5, while the final electoral roll is likely to be released only in October. Officials fear that simultaneous management of the SIR process and GBA election arrangements could severely affect both exercises.

The possibility of postponement has already triggered political discussions in Bengaluru, with opposition parties expected to question any delay beyond the court deadline. Political observers believe the delay could also impact preparations for civic governance reforms linked to the newly proposed Greater Bengaluru Authority framework.

Box: Shadow on GBA Elections

The ongoing SIR exercise is expected to engage thousands of election staff across Karnataka for nearly four months. Officials believe this could directly affect preparations for the GBA elections, making postponement increasingly likely despite the June 30 deadline reportedly fixed by the Supreme Court.

# HC directs removal of AI-generated defamatory content against Heggade family

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The High Court has directed the state government to ensure the removal of allegedly defamatory photographs, videos and online content generated using artificial intelligence (AI) targeting Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari D. Veerendra Heggade and his family from social media platforms within one week.

A single-judge bench headed by Justice S.R. Krishna Kumar passed the order while hearing a petition filed by Shri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project director Shinappa, Nandish Kumar Jain, D. Nischal, nephew of Veerendra Heggade, and P. Sunil.

The court directed the state government and CEN police authorities to initiate action in accordance with the law and coordinate with social media intermediaries, including Google, Meta,

WhatsApp and Instagram, for immediate removal of objectionable content circulating online.

According to the petitioners, manipulated and distorted AI-generated content targeting the Heggade family had been continuously shared on various digital platforms, causing embarrassment and reputational harm despite no criminal proceedings pending against the family members.

Advocate S. Rajashekar, appearing for the petitioners, argued before the court that the content was malicious, defamatory and intended to tarnish the reputation of Veerendra Heggade and his relatives.

He contended that social media platforms function merely as intermediary entities and requested the court to direct the authorities to take effective steps to curb further circulation of such material.

The government counsel informed the bench that the competent authorities would act on the grievance if sufficient time was granted for the process.

Taking note of the submissions, the High Court directed the authorities to ensure compliance within a week and disposed of the petition.The order comes amid growing concerns over misuse of artificial intelligence tools for creating fabricated and misleading digital content, raising fresh debates over online accountability, intermediary responsibility and protection against reputational damage on social media platforms.

# Karnataka to issue AI guidelines for medical education

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Karnataka's Department of Medical Education will soon release guidelines for the effective and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medical education institutions across the state, Additional Chief Secretary Mohammed Mohsin said on Friday.Speaking at the "Campus to Career – Future Ready University of Colleges" summit organised by the Department of Higher Education in Bengaluru, Mohsin said the government was also considering issuing a formal protocol and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for AI usage in educational institutions.He said the initiative would help students and young professionals adapt to rapidly expanding global AI technologies while ensuring ethical practices in academic and healthcare sectors.

Mohsin further announced that an Innovation Centre would be established at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences campus at Bhimanakuppe on Mysuru Road. The government is also planning wider AI integration across colleges.Highlighting growing mental health concerns, he said NIMHANS-model hospitals are being developed in Mysuru and Kalaburagi to strengthen mental healthcare services in the state.

## Fuel price hike exposes Centre's anti-people policy: Parameshwara

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara on Friday criticised the Centre over the recent hike in petrol and diesel prices, alleging that the decision exposed the Union government's "anti-people" policies and added burden on common citizens.Speaking to reporters near his residence in Sadashivanagar, Parameshwara said the sharp increase in fuel prices would have a direct impact on daily life and further fuel inflation across sectors."This development clearly shows that the Central government is not pro-people. There is an excessive increase in prices. Petrol and diesel rates have been raised unnecessarily, though the Centre was aware of the emerging situation from the beginning," he said.The minister said rising fuel prices would affect transport, essential commodities and household expenses, creating additional pressure on working-class and middle-class families.

MOTHERHOOD AND VALUES

# *Mother's love and sacrifice shape society: H.S. Sudhindra Kumar*

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Kannada Sahitya Parishad Yeshwantpur constituency president H.S. Sudhindra Kumar said love, sacrifice, compassion, affection and patience are the true symbols of motherhood and form the foundation of a strong society.

He was speaking at a memorial programme organised by the Kannada Sahitya Parishad of Yeshwantpur constituency to pay tribute to Seethamma, mother of MLA S.T. Somashekar, at Gururaja Kalyana Mantapa in Kengeri

suburb under the Yeshwantpur Assembly constituency.

Recalling the contributions of Seethamma, Sudhindra Kumar said her commitment towards women's education and empowerment was exemplary and deserved recognition. He described mothers as the first teachers in every individual's life, shaping children with values such as discipline, morality and culture while preparing them to become responsible citizens.

He further stated that Seethamma had played a key role in the success of S.T. Somashekar in both cooperative and political fields. "A mother's encouragement and values remain the guiding force behind every successful individual," he said.

Bairamangala Ramegowda, president of BM Shree Pratishthan, said Seethamma, who hailed from an agricultural family in Shettyhalli village, had dedicated herself to ensuring quality education for her children without discrimination between sons and daughters. He said her sacrifices and determination helped shape not only her family's future but also contributed to society through public service carried out by her children.

He described Seethamma as a courageous woman who worked for the welfare of poor, Dalit, middle-class and underprivileged communities and said her life stood as an inspiration for future generations.

## Building bylaw relaxation proposal faces 25 objections in Bengaluru

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The proposed amendment to the Bengaluru City Corporation Building Bylaws-2026, which seeks to relax permissible building violations up to 15 percent, has triggered strong opposition, with around 25 formal objections submitted to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

The objections, filed through emails, letters and public representations before the April 30 deadline, question both the legality and long-term impact of the proposal. Critics argue that the move could effectively open the door for large-scale regularisation of illegal constructions in Bengaluru and weaken urban planning norms.

Several objectors compared the proposal to an "Akrama-Sakrama-type" mechanism, warning that it may indirectly encourage builders and property owners to violate sanctioned plans in the future. Concerns have also been raised that the amendment could dilute accountability in the city's already strained urban infrastructure system.

QUICK READ

## Sunflower procurement begins under support price scheme

**CH NEWS,** Chitradurga
The District Task Force Committee has announced the commencement of sunflower procurement under the support price scheme in Chitradurga district. Officials said the procurement will be carried out by the Karnataka Cooperative Oilseed Growers Federation (KOF) at the APMC premises in Chitradurga. The support price has been fixed at 7,721 per quintal. Farmers can register within 50 days, and the procurement process will continue for 60 days. Sunflower will be purchased up to a limit of 20 quintals per farmer, based on yield guidelines.

## Panel advocate application deadline extended in Karwar

**CH NEWS,** Karwar
The Uttara Kannada Zilla Panchayat has extended the deadline for submitting applications for the post of panel advocates. Officials said qualified lawyers are being invited to represent the Zilla Pan chayat in writ petitions, civil suits and other cases before various courts as well as the Karnataka Administrative Tribunal in Belagavi and Bengaluru. The Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Panchayat stated that the last date to apply has now been extended up to May 30. Interested advocates have been requested to submit their applications within the revised deadline. The extension aims to encourage more eligible legal pro fessionals to participate in the selection process.

# Massive voter verification drive planned across all districts

### Preparation and training run June 20–29, followed by BLO house-to-house enumeration, form collection

**BENGALURU**

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Karnataka, has announced the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls for 2026, following directions from the Election Commission of India (ECI). The statewide exercise will be carried out across all districts under a structured timeline, with the final voter list scheduled for publication on October 7, 2026.

The revision process will cover nearly 5.55 crore voters in Karnataka and will involve around 59,050 Booth Level Officers (BLOs). Officials said the exercise is aimed at ensuring an accurate, updated and transparent electoral roll ahead of future elections.

According to the schedule, preparation, training and printing work will be carried out from June 20 to June 29. This will be followed by house-to-house visits by BLOs from June 30 to July 29, during which enumeration forms will be distributed and collected.

The draft electoral roll will be published on August 5, and citizens will be able to file claims and objections between August 5 and September 4. The disposal of objections and verification process will continue until October 3, after which the final list will be released.

CEO Anbukumar, addressing the media in Bengaluru, said voter mapping work in the state has already reached 86 percent completion.

He noted that in some districts like Kodagu and certain assembly constituencies, the progress is nearly complete.

He added that each voter will receive enumeration forms with QR codes for verification, and those listed in the 2002 voter roll will undergo mandatory checks.

Political parties have been urged to appoint Booth Level Agents (BLAs) at every polling station to ensure transparency. Officials also confirmed that voter facilitation centres will be set up at the gram panchayat level to assist citizens during the process.

## Legal aid centre opened in Mangaluru Jail

**MANGALURU**

A Legal Aid Service Center was inaugurated at the Mangaluru District Jail on Friday to provide free legal assistance to prisoners and their families, especially those involved in minor cases.

The centre was inaugurated by District Chief Judge Basavaraja. He said the District Legal Services Authority already offers free legal aid, and the new facility inside the jail will further strengthen access to justice for undertrial prisoners and their families.

District Legal Services Authority Member Secretary and Civil Judge Jaibunnisa said many families are often unaware of the exact charges or reasons for their relatives being in jail.

In several cases, this lack of information makes it difficult to apply for bail or pursue legal remedies. She added that the new centre will help bridge this gap by providing timely legal guidance.

The centre will function from 11 am to 1 pm and 4 pm to 5.30 pm daily. Three lawyers have been appointed to offer legal advice and support to inmates and their families.

In addition, 10 legal volunteers have been assigned across the district to extend similar assistance.

Officials said the service will be available even before arrest in eligible cases, but will not cover serious offences such as murder, POCSO, major NDPS cases, and rape cases. Families of prisoners will also be allowed to meet inmates twice a week throu gh the centre's coordination.

Jail Superintendent Sharanabasappa, lawyer Raviraj, KSISF inspector Subhash, and other officials attended the inauguration programme. The initiative is expected to improve legal awareness and access to justice for prisoners.

## BNCC urges quick action on public complaints

**BENGALURU**

Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar on Friday directed officials to respond quickly to citizen complaints and ensure timely resolution of civic issues raised through the weekly Phone-In Programme.

The programme was held at the Commissioner's office conference hall on Amruthahalli Main Road from 7:00 AM, where the Commissioner personally received grievances from residents across various wards.

Officials said most complaints were related to road maintenance and solid waste management. Other issues included concerns about forest areas, e-Khata services, electricity supply, parks, and general civic infrastructure. The Commissioner instructed departments concerned to examine each grievance and take immediate corrective action.

A total of 54 calls were received during the session, and 64 grievances were formally registered. Officials were asked to ensure prompt follow-up and report action taken on each case.

According to BNCC data, since the Phone-In Programme began on September 26, a total of 1,484 calls and 1,905 grievances have been recorded over 33 weeks. Of these, 1,389 grievances have already been resolved, while 360 are still pending. Officials said some of the pending issues require long-term solutions and are being addressed in phases.

The Commissioner said the initiative, conducted every Friday, is aimed at directly listening to citizens and improving the speed of grievance redressal. He added that the programme has received a positive response from the public and will continue regularly to strengthen civic accountability.

Deputy Commissioner (Administration) Somashekhar, Chief Engineer Raghavendra Prasad, executive engineers, and other senior officials were present during the programme.

*Campaign aims to reduce pendency, improve transparency, grievance redressal, running Saturdays across Bengaluru with equipped centres*

# B'luru to launch My e-Khata Rights campaign from today

**BENGALURU**

Greater Bangalore Authority has launched the My e-Khata My Rights campaign to help property owners across the city get clear and safe land records through digital services. Starting today (16th May) the programme will begin across five urban corporations and aims to reduce fraud and confusion in property documentation. More than 23 lakh property records have been scanned and digitised and e-Khatas are being issued to citizens in phases. The government has also announced the Bhoo Guarantee scheme offering a reduced fee for converting B Khata to A Khata.

The conversion charge has been reduced from five percent to two percent and the scheme will remain valid for 100 days. Authorities said services will be offered at multiple centres with help desks counters and trained staff to assist citizens. Each centre will handle 100 to 200 visitors daily and tokens will be issued if crowds increase beyond capacity. The campaign targets serving about 5000 citizens every Saturday through the 100-day programme across Bengaluru. Officials including revenue inspectors and technical staff will be present to resolve issues on the spot. Citizens are requested to carry property documents identity proof and application details when visiting the centres.

The main goals are to reduce pendency improve transparency increase convenience and provide faster grievance redressal for residents. The campaign will run every Saturday at 52 locations across Bengaluru's five urban corporations. Citizens with pending applications or complaints are encouraged to attend their nearest centre for assistance and updates. Each venue will be equipped with help desks computers printers scanners and internet connectivity for smooth service delivery.

Officials said SMS and phone alerts will inform applicants when their e-Khata is ready for collection. First-time applicants will also receive guidance on how to apply and complete the process correctly. The programme is designed to provide quick on-the-spot solutions for citizens' property-related concerns and complaints. Senior officials said the initiative will strengthen citizen services and ensure better record management across Bengaluru. Extensive outreach through SMS calls and public notices has been carried out to inform residents about centres and encourage participation in the campaign across the city areas.

## Commissioner highlights importance of public trust in police

**BENGALURU**

Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh has warned of strict action against police officers who fail to respond properly to citizens approaching police stations with complaints.

He was speaking at the monthly parade held at the Uttaranagar Armed Reserve Force parade ground in Thanisandra on Friday. He said effective functioning of police stations is key to maintaining public trust and ensuring smooth law and order in the city.

The Commissioner stressed that when officers respond promptly and responsibly to public grievances, the police department earns respect and credibility.

However, he noted that there have been complaints that some police personnel are not treating complainants properly when they visit stations.

He cautioned that if station-level officers fail to respond, complainants have the right to approach senior officials.

But he made it clear that such situations should not arise in the first place, and negligence will not be tolerated.

Seemant Kumar Singh further stated that instructions have already been issued at the station level to ensure proper behaviour and responsiveness towards the public. He also said he has directed Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) and Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACPs) to regularly visit and inspect police stations under their jurisdiction.

The Commissioner warned that any lapses reported during inspections or through public complaints will result in strict departmental action against the concerned officers without hesitation.

## Valmiki leaders push for higher ST reservation share

**HUNSUR**

A delegation of leaders from the Valmiki community in Karnataka met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and urged the government to increase Scheduled Tribe reservation from the existing level to 7 percent.

The delegation was led by former MP V S Ugrappa and included representatives from various tribal and community organizations who raised concerns about representation and justice in reservation policy.

Leaders said the Chief Minister had earlier assured that he would take up the matter with the Central Government and meet the Prime Minister and the Union Tribal Affairs Minister to push for an increase in ST reservation. In this context, discussions on internal reservation among tribal groups have also gained attention in the state.

Tribal leaders Jayappa, Lakshmi, Vitthal, and Srikanth demanded that at least 4 percent of the reservation share be allocated specifically to Adivasi communities, while the remaining portion be distributed as per the High Court directions and the Assadi Committee report.

They submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary seeking immediate action.

They also urged the government to rehabilitate 3418 tribal families reportedly evicted from forest areas without proper resettlement, as directed by court orders.

Meanwhile, former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai stated that the reservation was earlier increased to 7 percent during his tenure and noted that Valmiki community members already hold 15 MLA seats.

*South Western Railway launched a special train till June 28; Patil seeks permanent service with fixed timetable*

# Vijayapura–Bengaluru special train starts via Hubballi

**BENGALURU**

A special train service between Bengaluru and Vijayapura via Hubballi and Gadag bypass has been welcomed by Karnataka Infrastructure Development and District In-charge Minister M.B. Patil, who has urged the Centre to make it a permanent service.

Patil expressed happiness that the Union Government responded to his request for improved rail connectivity between the two cities. He thanked Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Minister of State V. Somanna for approving the special service and said it should be regularised soon in the interest of passengers.

The South Western Railway has already announced a special train on this route, which will operate from Saturday until June 28. Patil said he has again written to the Union Ministers requesting that the service be made permanent with a fixed timetable for public convenience.

He suggested that the train should depart Bengaluru at 8 pm and reach Vijayapura at 6 am, while the return service should also operate at similar convenient timings. He noted that the current arrival time at Yeshwantpur around 4 am is inconvenient for passengers and requested that it be rescheduled to arrive between 5.30 am and 6 am. The special train will operate once a week, departing Bengaluru on Saturdays and returning on Sundays. It consists of 19 coaches and will halt at major stations including Tumakuru, Arsikere, Davangere, Haveri, Gadag bypass, Badami, Bagalkot, Almatti and Basavana Bagevadi.

Patil also pointed out that the existing journey time of around 15 hours between Bengaluru and Vijayapura could be reduced to nearly 10 hours via the bypass route, benefiting commuters and improving connectivity between north Karnataka and the state capital.

KSCST-CLIMATE-COLLABORATION

# *Manipal hosts climate change action plan training programme*

**UDUPI**

A training programme on the Karnataka State Climate Change Action Plan was held at the District Resource Centre, Rajatadriya in Manipal, jointly organised by the Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI) and the Karnataka State Council of Science and Technology.

The programme was inaugurated by Joint Director of the Horticulture Department Kshama Patil, who symbolically opened the event by watering a plant. Speaking at the session, EMPRI Senior Consultant Dr. Sarita Boya stressed that district-level officers play a key role in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. She said all departments must work in coordination to effectively implement the action plan at the local level.

She explained that the Karnataka State Climate Change Action Plan was prepared by EMPRI under the Department of Forest, Environment and Ecology, as per state government directions, and was approved by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 2024. Based on this plan, departments have been assigned key performance indicators for the period 2025–2030.

She added that the initiative, which has already covered 22 districts, is now being expanded to all 31 districts in 2026–27. About 15 departments will be involved in implementing the programme, and officials were urged to meet targets within the stipulated time. Experts at the programme also highlighted the impact of climate change, including irregular rainfall, rising temperatures, floods and effects on agriculture and livelihoods. They emphasized the need for careful planning and environmental consideration in all development projects.

Officials from the water resources, animal husbandry, fisheries, and power departments participated in the training and shared technical inputs on local environmental conditions and data management systems.

## Udachappa Malagi to receive State Honour Award

**HAVERI**

The Karunada Kannada Literary and Cultural Association (R), Bengaluru has announced that social worker Udachappa Malagi will be honoured with the state-level Karunada Horata Seva Ratna Award. State president S D Mudennavar said the award is being given in recognition of Malagi's long-standing service in social justice movements and his efforts for the welfare of marginalised communities. He said Malagi has been actively working for nearly 35 years, raising voice for the exploited and voiceless sections of society. The award will be presented during the second state-level literary conference scheduled to be held on the 25th at Dr B R Ambedkar Sabha Bhavan in Haveri. Organisers said the event will bring together writers, social thinkers and activists from across the state. They added that the recognition aims to encourage continued social service and awareness about equality and justice.

QUICK READ

## Hunsur marks DK Shivakumar's birthday with service activities

**CH NEWS,** Hunsur

As part of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's 64th birthday celebrations, Congress party workers, youth leaders and supporters of former MLA H.P. Manjunath organised service activities in Hunsur town. Party members offered milk abhisheka to Shivakumar's portrait and distributed fruits, water and snacks to patients at the city government hospital. Speaking on the occasion, HUDA Chairman H.P. Amarnath praised Shivakumar as a loyal and efficient leader of the Congress party and wished him a long life and continued political success.

## Gangavathi officials ensure timely NFSA rice supply

**CH NEWS,** Koppal

The Gangavathi Tahsildar has announced that ration rice for May and June will be distributed together in May itself under the Natio nal Food Security Act. Offi cials said the decision has been taken as per gov ernment instructions to ensu re smooth supply of essen tial food grains. Under the scheme, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) card holders will receive 70 kg of rice for two mon ths, while BPL card holders will get 10 kg per family member for the same period. Authorities said beneficiaries must complete biometric verification twi ce for technical records. Officials urged all ration card holders to collect their full entitlement during the May distribution cycle without delay.

## Byadagi Road widening work welcomed in Haveri

**CH NEWS,** Haveri

The widening of the main road in Byadagi town has been welcomed by the Karnataka State Guarantee Scheme Implementation Authority Vice Chairman S.R. Patil. In a letter addressed to the Haveri Deputy Commissioner, he expressed appreciation to all officials and departments involved in clearing legal hurdles and resolving issues related to the project. He congratulated the district administration, police officials, additional district collectors, taluk officers and the public for their cooperation in completing the road widening work smoothly. Authorities said the project will improve traffic flow and ease mov ement in Byadagi town, benefiting residents and commuters in the region.

# Madikeri food court project launched at Rajasit Park

Officials said over 65 lakh tourists visit Rajasit Park annually, prioritising its development. DC S.J. Somashekar stressed preventing railway encroachment

**MADIKERI**

MLA Dr. Mantar Gowda performed Bhoomi Pooja on Friday for the construction of a new food court at Rajasit Park in Madikeri, marking the beginning of multiple development works aimed at improving tourist facilities and city infrastructure.

The food court is being developed under a public-private partnership at an estimated cost of ₹2 crore near the miniature railway section inside the park. The MLA said the project aims to provide clean and quality food to tourists visiting the popular destination.

He added that special care is being taken to maintain environmental cleanliness and ensure that the construction does not disturb the existing miniature railway line. He also said efforts are underway to introduce an electric miniature train in coordination with the South Western Railway division.

Officials said the food court project is expected to be completed within one year, and the MLA urged contractors to finish the work quickly for public convenience.

District officials said that more than 65 lakh tourists visit Rajasit Park annually, making its development a priority. Deputy Commissioner S.J. Somashekar stressed that no encroachment should occur in the railway space and environmental protection must be maintained.

Municipal Council leaders said basic facilities for tourists are essential and welcomed efforts to improve the park's attractiveness. They assured full cooperation for city development projects.

In a parallel event, MLA Mantar Gowda also laid foundation stones for several civic works in Madikeri city under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development and State Disaster Relief Fund scheme. These works, valued at around ₹2.72 crore, include road improvements, drainage systems, and construction of retaining walls across multiple wards.

The MLA said priority is being given to road repair, drainage improvement, and strengthening of weak road sections to improve urban mobility and safety. He added that environmental cleanliness and tourist-friendly infrastructure remain key focus areas for city development.

Municipal officials, Urban Development Authority representatives, and elected members attended the programme and assured continued support for development works.

Authorities said the combined projects aim to enhance tourism facilities at Rajasit Park while also improving basic infrastructure across Madikeri city for residents and visitors alike.

## Hebbat village drain project brings residents relief

**SRINIVASPURA**

Residents of Hebbat village under Chaldiganahalli Gram Panchayat limits in Srinivaspura taluk are expected to get relief from long standing sewage problems as drain construction work is set to begin soon on Mosque Road. Former Gram Panchayat member H M Anand Kumar said the proposed drain will be built from the Urdu School area to near Nazir Sab's house to ensure proper flow of sewage water. For several years villagers have faced serious inconvenience because of the absence of a proper drainage system along the main road. During rainy days sewage water and stagnant water collect on the road making movement difficult for pedestrians motorists school children and women.

Residents said they have been struggling daily due to poor sanitation and unhygienic conditions in the locality. After repeated requests from villagers Anand Kumar visited the area and inspected the situation personally. He said a proposal has already been submitted to the concerned authorities seeking immediate approval and commencement of the drain construction work.

According to him the project will permanently solve the issue of water stagnation improve cleanliness and help create a healthier environment in the village. Villagers welcomed the development and urged officials to begin the work without delay while ensuring quality construction standards. Residents said completion of the drainage work would greatly improve road conditions public hygiene and safety for everyone travelling through the busy route and hoped authorities would complete the project quickly for the benefit of the entire village community in coming months ahead.

## Residents demand action against rising stray dog threat

**SRINIVASPURA**

Residents of Zakir Hussain Mohalla and nearby areas in Srinivaspura have expressed concern over the increasing number of stray dogs and questioned the effectiveness of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme being implemented by the municipal authorities.

Locals said stray dogs are frequently seen roaming in groups across residential streets, creating fear among pedestrians, vehicle riders, women, and children. Residents claimed that the situation has become more serious during the summer holidays, as children playing outside their homes are facing a greater risk of dog attacks. Several people also reported incidents of stray dogs chasing moving vehicles at night.

Citizens questioned whether the ABC programme, which includes sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs, is being carried out properly in the town. According to residents, repeated cases of female stray dogs giving birth in areas such as Zakir Hussain Mohalla, Rajaji Road, Azad Road, and Gaffar Khan Mohalla indicate that the programme is not being implemented effectively.

People also complained about continuous barking and disturbances during nighttime, saying the growing stray dog population has created fear among children and elderly residents. Improper waste disposal has been identified by locals as another major reason for the increase in stray dogs. Residents alleged that food waste dumped near hotels and market areas attracts stray animals and leads to large gatherings of dogs in public places.

The public has urged the municipal council to strengthen sterilisation and vaccination drives and ensure proper implementation of the ABC programme across all wards of Srinivaspura. Residents also demanded improved solid waste management, scientific garbage disposal, and regular public awareness programmes on rabies prevention and stray animal management.

## Ramanna Boregowda elected as milk society president

**MAGADI**

Ramanna Boregowda was elected unopposed as president of Palya Milk Producers Cooperative Society in Dand taluk on Friday. The election saw no other nominations, so he was declared elected by returning officer KT Umesh. Supporters celebrated the unopposed win by bursting crackers and distributing sweets in the village. Speaking after the election, Ramanna said dairy farming is the main livelihood for most rural farmers. He promised to work for better milk prices and urged the government and BAMUL to act. He said if prices are not increased, farmers may leave dairy farming in large numbers. He thanked MLA HC Balakrishna and BAMUL director HN Ashok for their support in the election process. The dairy secretary said the unit has been running profitably since 2015 with quality milk supply. He added that a new dairy building will soon be constructed with a foundation ceremony next week. Local leaders and villagers attended the event and welcomed the new leadership of the cooperative society.

*The initiative introduces automated scanning, behavioural monitoring, and Neurotrack-66 framework to improve driver focus and road safety*

# Vision 100 aims for zero road accidents by 2035

**BENGALURU**

Mother India Care, in partnership with Cosmic Chief Care, has launched a nationwide road safety campaign as part of its "Vision 100" strategy. The goal is to achieve 100% road safety in India by 2035. The announcement took place in Bengaluru during the "Decade of Action" campaign, which focuses on reducing road accidents and raising public awareness.

The initiative introduces new systems like automated stopwatch video scanning, behavioral monitoring, and the Neurotrack-66™ framework to improve driver focus and hazard awareness. The organization says these technologies will replace traditional driving tests and enhance safety through structured mental exercises and awareness practices.

A key part of the project includes the "Road Safety Oath," which encourages citizens to commit to following traffic laws. The organization also proposed ideas like the "The Head (H)" unit to measure human focus in safety situations.

Mother India Care aims to increase India's Conditioning Awareness Score to 88%, potentially reducing economic losses caused by road accidents through improved road safety awareness and behavioural conditioning. The initiative focuses on public welfare supported by neuroscience-inspired monitoring and advanced technological concepts. It plans to implement a large-scale national programme over the next decade.

## Entry to St Mary's Island suspended for four months as monsoon approaches

**UDUPI**

Tourists planning a visit to St Mary's Islands and adventure activities at Malpe Beach will have to put their plans on hold, as the district administration has announced a four-month ban on island entry and water sports from May 16 to September 15.

The restriction has been imposed as a precautionary measure ahead of the monsoon season, when rough sea conditions and high waves pose a major safety risk for visitors and boat operators along the Karnataka coast.

Authorities stated that under the Harbour Craft Rules, 1963, the period from May 16 to September 15 is officially treated as an adverse weather season. As per regulations, all marine tourism activities, including tourist boat services and water adventure sports, are suspended during this time every year.

The move comes at a time when Malpe Beach has been witnessing heavy tourist footfall due to the ongoing summer holidays. Thousands of visitors have been arriving daily to enjoy beach activities and island tours. However, many tourists who planned trips after May 15 were left disappointed after learning that the island season had ended.

## Books build character in students' lives: Nanjuda Swamy

**MADIKERI**

Books should become lifelong companions for students rather than being limited only to classroom learning, said Prof. B. Nanjuda Swamy, Principal of Government First Grade College, Periyapatna. He was speaking at the closing ceremony of the 2025–26 academic year's curricular and extracurricular activities held at Government First Grade College in Madikeri on Friday.

He said that reading helps students develop knowledge, discipline and strong human values. After completing education, many students often feel confused about their next step, and in such situations, regular reading can guide them in the right direction. Books, he added, help build a strong foundation for success throughout life.Prof. Swamy highlighted that great personalities such as Buddha, Basavanna, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam spre ad the message of equality and humanity. He urged students to adopt these values in their daily lives and treat everyone equally, regardless of caste or background. He also said that the Constitution of India is the grea test guiding book, as it ensures equal rights for all citizens.

He further advised students to follow Basavanna's scientific and progressive idea that "body is a temple" and live with discipline and good conduct. College Development Committee Vice President Naveen Ambekallu said the government college is progressing well with support from donors and is excelling in academics and cultural activities. He also distributed prizes to meritorious students.

Presiding over the event, Principal Dr. P.K. Venkatesh Prasanna said students should shed the mindset that only private colleges offer quality education.

## KRS reservoir water level drops

**MANDYA**

The water level in the Krishnarajasagar (KRS) reservoir has been steadily dropping, exposing the Sri Narayanaswamy temple that had remained submerged for the past three years. As the backwater recedes, parts of the ancient structure, including its tower base and stone pillars, are once again visible near Bore Anandur.

The temple was earlier submerged when the KRS dam was built, and the original deity was shifted to Majjigepura village nearby. Even today, devotees continue daily worship at the relocated temple. Around ten nearby villages consider Sri Narayanaswamy as their local deity. Locals said the temple had briefly reappeared in 2019 and again in 2023, but this year it has become more clearly visible due to a sharper fall in water levels.

AIR EXAM INITIATIVE

# *ADC Kumaraswamy reviews exam arrangements in district*

**CHITRADURGA**

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy has instructed officials to ensure smooth and transparent conduct of SSLC Exam-2 scheduled from May 18 to 23 across Chitradurga district.

He was speaking while chairing a preparatory meeting held at the District Collector's office hall. He said that since SSLC Exam-1 was conducted successfully, the same level of discipline and care must be maintained for Exam-2 as well, ensuring that no confusion or irregularities occur.

Kumaraswamy directed officials to provide all basic facilities at examination centres, including clean drinking water and hygienic toilet arrangements. He also stated that district-level officers have been appointed as vigilance teams to monitor examination centres and prevent malpractice.

Deputy Director of School Education M.R. Manjunath informed that the exam will be conducted in 16 centres across the district with a total of 4,424 registered students. Taluk-wise registrations include Challakere (748), Chitradurga (1,494), Hiriyur (688), Holalkere (445), Hosadurga (726), and Molakalmuru (323).

He said a central monitoring unit has been set up at the Zilla Panchayat, with nodal officers and observers appointed for supervision. Police and health department staff will be deployed at all centres along with first aid kits to ensure safety and emergency support.

Officials also suggested imposing prohibitory orders around examination centres to maintain law and order and ensure a peaceful environment for students.

The exam schedule includes First Language on May 18, Science on May 19, Second Language on May 20, Mathematics on May 21, Third Language and NSQF on May 22, and Social Science on May 23. Education department officials and district-level officers participated in the meeting.

## Udupi hosts mango mela featuring rare varieties

**UDUPI**

A colourful mango mela showcasing more than 12 tonnes of premium mango varieties from Ramanagara district began on Thursday at the Raitha Seva Kendra premises in Doddanagudde, Udupi. The event has been organised jointly by the Department of Horticulture and the Ramanagara District Mango and Horticulture Growers' Marketing Association.

The festival was inaugurated by Udupi-Chikkamagaluru MP Kota Srinivas Poojary, who said the mela would help farmers market their produce directly to consumers without the involvement of middlemen.

"Mango melas like this create a direct link between growers and buyers. Consumers get access to fresh and quality man goes, while farmers receive fair prices for their produce," he said. More than 10 stalls ha ve been set up at the venue, dis playing and selling several po pular mango varieties including Mallika, Kesar, Imam Pa sand, Rasapuri, Sindhoora, Totapuri, Kalapad, Sakkaregutti, Alphonso, Sundari, Dasheri, Manganapalli and Malgova.

QUICK READ

## Excise Department reports multiple law violation cases

**CH NEWS,** Gadag
The Excise Department in Gadag district has reported a large number of cases registered under various excise laws between July 2025 and April 2026. Officials said 268 cases related to licence condition violations were recorded, collecting a fine of 40.51 lakh, and four licences were suspended during this period. In addition, 636 cases were registered for public drinking violations under Section 15(A), with fines amounting to 11.17 lakh. Authorities also reported 28 illegal sale cases, 23 bootlegging cases, and 9 NDPS-related cases, all of which are under action as per rules. In May 2026 alone,

## All India Radio walkathon held in Karwar

**CH NEWS,** Karwar
A walkathon was organised in Karwar on Friday as part of the 90th anniversary celebrations of All India Radio. The event was flagged off at Rabindranath Tagore Beach by representatives from local organisations and All India Radio officials. The walk began at Tagore Beach and passed through Henja Nayak Circle and Kodibag Road before concluding at the All India Radio Karwar office premises. Participants raised slogans highlighting the importance of All India Radio and its public service role. More than 100 people, including AIR staff, program assistants, Rotary members and social organisation representatives, took part.

## BESCOM releases helpline numbers for power complaints

**CH NEWS,** Chitradurga
To ensure quick response to electricity supply issues in Chitradurga city limits, BESCOM has released contact numbers of officials and service centers for public complaints. Authorities said residents can directly report power disruptions based on their local areas. For citywide issues, Assistant Executive Engineer Timmanna H can be contacted at 94482 79037. Separate contact numbers have been provided for Kelagote, Vidyana gar, Holalkere Road, Madakaripura, Basaveshwara Nagar and surrounding areas through respective assistant engineers and service centers. Officials said in case of unresolved complaints, the public may contact Executive Engineer Lingaraj M.H at 9448279014.

# Mandya orders strict waste rules and sewer upgrades

Dr. Kumar stressed clean environment responsibility, warned waste mismanagement risks, and urged awareness campaigns with public participation

**MANDYA**

District Collector Dr. Kumar has directed all urban local bodies in Mandya district to strictly implement the Solid Waste Management Rules-2026, which came into effect from April 1 following Supreme Court orders and Central Government notification.

He issued the instructions during a review meeting with municipal commissioners and chief officers held at the District Collector's office. The Collector said the new rules must be enforced without exception and citizens must be made fully aware about proper waste disposal practices.

Dr. Kumar said maintaining a clean and healthy environment is the responsibility of all, and improper waste management poses serious risks to public health and the environment. He directed officials to intensify awareness campaigns and ensure public participation in cleanliness drives.

Under the new rules, mandatory segregation of waste into four categories has been introduced: wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste, and special care waste such as batteries, bulbs, expired medicines, and paint cans. Officials were instructed to ensure proper collection, tra nsport, processing, and disposal systems for each category.

He also ordered identification and registration of all bulk waste generators and instructed that waste should be processed at the source wherever possible. Strict penalties, including fines and disconnection of water supply, were suggested for violations.

The Collector emphasized regular removal of garbage hotspots in cities, promotion of recycling of dry waste, and encouragement of household-level composting and biogas production. Daily door-to-door waste collection was also stressed.

In a separate review meeting, Dr. Kumar directed officials to complete upgrading works of wastewater treatment plants in Mandya city by the end of August to prevent sewage from entering Guthalu-Yattagadahalli lake.

He said the upgrade is being carried out after concerns over wastewater pollution, including inspection by the Lokayukta. The project is funded with ₹30 crore from the National Green Tribunal compensation fund. The treatment plants at Guthalu and Chikkegowdanadoddi have capacities of 9.52 MLD and 8.90 MLD respectively. Several sewerage rehabilitation and new treatment projects across Mandya, Maddur, Nagamangala, Pandavapura, Malavalli and Srirangapatna municipalities are under various stages of tendering and execution.

Officials said multiple DPRs have been prepared and works are expected to begin soon to strengthen the city's sewage and drainage infrastructure and improve environmental protection across the district.

# Failure to protect students' rights; APU faces criticism

**BENGALURU**

Arvind from People's Union Civil Liberties-Karnataka (PUCL-K), Dr. Mohan Rao, a Professor from Jua University held a press meet on Friday, speaking on the case of Akhil Bharatiya Vidarathi Parishad's (ABVP) vigilante violence against Azim Premji University (APU) on 24th February, 2026.

The University's failure to protect the students' right to a safe campus was criticised as they filed a FIR registered agai nst SPARK-APU, a student-led group that organised reading circles, and formed a Special Disciplinary Committee which led to the suspension of a student for 2 years. In response, various civil society organisations visited the University on 23rd March, 2026, to meet with the students to understand the details of the incident.

The team included members such as Aishwarya R. – People's Union for Civil Liberties-Karnataka (PUCL-K) and Veeresh – All India Students Federation (AISF). This broug ht attention to the increasing threats of disciplinary action by the University administration and an environment of fear in the APU campus as expressed by the students and faculty members in the fact- finding report. The ABVP mob attack took place in the context in which educational institutions across the country have been witnessing similar attempts at curbing students' expression as seen on 20th February, 2026.

All India Students' Federation, the student wing of CPI organised a study circle in Dr. Hari Singh Gour University (Sagar, Madhya Pradesh) aimed at promoting scientific temper and rational debate but was interrupted by a mob of 100 to 150 people allegedly from the ABVP and RSS, who brutally assaulted the participants.

The fact-checking team recommends that the University withdraw all charges against SPARK-APU and remove the restrictions on students' activities which aim at promoting critical thinking and the police must ensure a fair investigation and action taken against the ABVP vigilante mob.

*The District Magistrate urged parents to ensure polio vaccination for all eligible children, stressing continued vigilance*

# Swaroop T.K. reviews polio immunisation campaign plans

**UDUPI**

District Magistrate Swaroop T.K. has instructed officials to ensure that no child between the ages of 0 to 5 is left out during the upcoming Pulse Polio Vaccination Programme scheduled for June 28 across Udupi district.

She issued the directions while chairing the District Vaccination Task Force Coordination Committee meeting held at the District Magistrate's Office, Rajatadri in Manipal on Thursday.

The District Magistrate urged parents to cooperate with health authorities and ensure that every eligible child receives the polio vaccine without fail. She said the programme remains essential despite India being declared polio-free by the World Health Organization in 2014, as neighboring countries still report cases.

She added that continued vaccination is necessary as a precautionary measure to prevent any risk of re-emergence. She also emphasized that officials must ensure strict implementation of polio and measles vaccination drives without negligence.

Swaroop T.K. said it is the responsibility of field-level staff to convince families who hesitate or refuse vaccination and ensure full coverage of all children. She noted that the district achieved over 103 percent coverage in the previous Pulse Polio round, with more than 65,000 children vaccinated successfully.

For the upcoming drive, officials have identified 63,524 children aged 0 to 5 years. A total of 668 vaccination centres, 18 transit booths, 5 mobile teams, 1,363 field teams, and 155 supervisors have been deployed to ensure smooth implementation.

She directed that vaccination centres be set up in anganwadis and schools, and special booths be arranged at railway stations and highway toll points since the programme falls on a Sunday. She also instructed MESCOM officials to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply for safe vaccine storage.The District Magistrate stressed the need for increased awareness among migrant families, construction workers, and daily wage earners so that no child is missed. She called for extensive publicity through social media. She added that all departments, including health, education, transport, police, railways, and women and child development, must work in coordination for the success of the programme.

Officials also discussed HPV vaccination awareness for adolescent girls aged 14 to 15 years to prevent cervical cancer, and urged parents to support the initiative for better public health outcomes in the district.

# Pollution threatens centuries-old fish-catching festival in Surathkal

**UDUPI**

A unique folk tradition of Tulunadu is slowly fading away under the shadow of pollution, as the once vibrant Chelairu Khandevu fish-catching festival in Surathkal has now been reduced to a symbolic ritual attended by only a handful of people.

The traditional event, held every year in the Khandevu region of the Nandini River on May 15, shares a deep cultural and spiritual connection with Shri Dharmarasu Ullaya Daivasthana. A similar celebration is also observed during the April Sankranti at Baggundi Lake in Kulai.

For generations, villagers and relatives from different places gathered to catch fish in the river and lake as part of the annual celebration. Families working in cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru would often return to their native village specifically to participate in the festival, which symbolised community bonding, tradition and devotion.

# Pvt bus operators likely to hike fares by 5% amid fuel price rise

**UDUPI**

Private bus operators in Karnataka are likely to increase passenger fares by around 5 percent following the recent hike in petrol and diesel prices by the Centre and the state government. Karnataka State Bus Owners' Federation president Kuyiladi Suresh Nayak said a final decision would be taken after a meeting in Bengaluru next week.

Speaking in Udupi, Suresh Nayak said operating buses at the current diesel prices has become financially difficult for private operators. He pointed out that the state government had earlier increased fuel prices by ₹3 per litre, and the Centre has now further raised rates amid growing tensions and uncertainty in the Middle East and the global oil market.

"Despite repeated fuel price hikes, bus fares had not been revised till now. However, the present situation has made a fare increase unavoidable," he said.

According to him, existing transport regulations allow an increase of 25 paise per kilometre per passenger based on toll charges and cess payments. The federation is expected to submit a formal proposal to the Karnataka government seeking approval for the revised fare structure.

The proposed fare revision is expected to impact thousands of daily commuters who rely on private buses, particularly in coastal and rural regions where such services form a crucial mode of transportation.

Bus operators have argued that apart from diesel price hikes, maintenance costs, toll fees, spare parts expenses and employee wages have also gone up considerably over the last few years. They claim that continuing operations without revising fares could push several operators into losses.

Suresh Nayak said the federation would hold detailed discussions with member associations during the Bengaluru meeting before taking a final call on the percentage of increase and implementation date.

# Siddaramaiah reviews progress of Hunsur hospital project

**HUNSUR**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has assured that the long-pending Hunsur Hi-Tech Hospital will be inaugurated soon by Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao after completion of final works.

The Chief Minister inspected the newly built Hi-Tech Hospital located near Arasu Bhavan on the National Highway in Hunsur and reviewed the progress of the project. The hospital has been constructed at a cost of over ₹31.5 crore.

Speaking to reporters, Siddaramaiah said the foundation for the hospital was laid during the tenure of then MLA H.P. Manjunath. He noted that the project initially moved slowly after the change of government, but work has now been accelerated after the present government released an additional grant of ₹9.5 crore. He said the remaining construction work will be completed within 15 days and the pending ₹1.50 crore grant will also be released soon. Tenders for required medical equipment have already been called, and installation of machines is expected to be completed within the next two months, followed by testing and commissioning.

The Chief Minister also responded to questions on national issues, stating that the NEET examination system has shortcomings due to outsourcing to private agencies without proper accountability. He added that the government supports religious freedom and will not impose restrictions on clothing or practices of any community.

# Apollo Hospital launch highlights devpt push

**HUNSUR**

A new Apollo Hospital on BM Road in Hunsur city was inaugurated in the presence of public representatives and officials. The event also saw felicitation of former MLA H P Manjunath, who was honoured with a cash award presented by Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao. The programme was attended by several leaders, including religious seers, Congress functio naries, and local dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, former MLA H P Manjunath said he remains committed to the development of the taluk and serving people even when not in power. He said he would continue to respond to public issues like an elected representative and assured that he would always stand with the people in their difficulties and progress.

He also criticised the opposition, alleging that unnecessary political debates were distracting attention from important issues such as exam irr egularities affecting students. He said that the govern ment should focus on the future of children and education al reforms instead of creating divisions. Referring to national entrance exams like NEET, he said that education-related con cerns should be handled carefully to protect students' interests and reduce stress among families. Manjunath clarified that he has no direct involvement with the hospital but express ed hope that poor patients from the region would receive quality treatment with out addi tional burden. He said access to affordable heal thcare shoul d remain a priority. Several dignitaries, in cluding Swamiji Samba Sada shiva, Congress leaders, and representatives from various organizations, attended the event and highlighted the importance of improved heal thc are facilities in the region for public benefit and community development in the coming years.

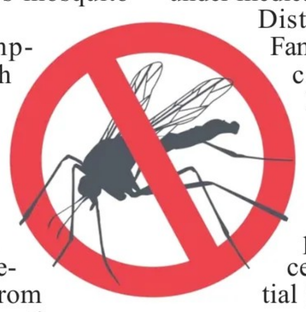
MOSQUITO CONTROL DRIVE

# *Dengue awareness drive begins across district*

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

National Dengue Day is being observed in the district from May 16 to June 1 with the theme "Community participation for dengue control: Check, clean and cover," aimed at increasing public awareness and preventing the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

Health officials said dengue and chikungunya are infectious diseases spread through the bite of infected female Aedes mosquitoes. They warned that the diseases can spread quickly in areas where stagnant water allows mosquito breeding.



Common symptoms include high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, and intense muscle and joint pain. In severe cases, patients may experience bleeding from the gums, nose, mouth, or develop red spots on the skin. Officials stressed that there is no specific vaccine or direct cure for dengue, and treatment is given based on symptoms under medical supervision.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar said early diagnosis and immediate treatment at nearby government hospitals or health centres are essential if symptoms appear.

He also highlighted that mosquito control is the most effective prevention method. Citizens were advised to regularly empty or cover water containers such as drums, cement tanks, barrels, clay pots, tyres, and buckets to prevent mosquito breeding.

People have been urged to use mosquito nets while sleeping, install window screens, and use repellents like coils or neem smoke. Authorities also advised the public to ensure that rainwater does not collect in discarded items like bottles and tyres around homes.

Health officials said awareness programmes will continue across the district during the campaign period.

# Bus stand toilet crisis sparks public anger

**HUNSUR**

Public anger has grown in Hunsur after complaints that the toilet facility at the rural bus stand has been without water for the past four days, causing severe inconvenience to commuters and local residents. The issue has drawn criticism from citizens who say basic sanitation services are being ignored by local authorities.

Satyappa, President of MAS Foundation, said Hunsur serves as a sub-division centre for six taluks and sees heavy public movement every day. He said the bus stand toilet is widely used but has been left in an unhygienic condition, forcing people to struggle for basic facilities.

He blamed administrative negligence and said elected representatives are failing to address essential civic problems. He alleged that instead of focusing on local development issues, some representatives are busy with political activities elsewhere, leaving civic services unattended.

Residents also pointed out that many elderly people and patients visiting the bus stand depend heavily on toilet facilities, making the situation more serious. They said the lack of water supply has made the facility unusable and unsanitary.

Satyappa criticised municipal officials for inaction and said public tax money is being collected but not reflected in basic infrastructure maintenance. He demanded immediate restoration of water supply and proper maintenance of the toilet facility.

He warned that if the issue is not resolved quickly, residents and activists will stage a protest in front of the Hunsur Municipal Council, holding elected representatives responsible for negligence in public service delivery and poor civic management in the town.

QUICK READ

## Jharkhand HC raps Bokaro police over missing girl case

**Ranchi**

The Jharkhand High Court on Friday expressed strong displeasure over the lackadaisical handling of a missing minor girl case dating back to 2020 by Bokaro police, warning that if the situation does not improve, the probe may be handed over to the CBI. A division bench of Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad and Justice Sanjay Prasad, while hearing a petition related to the disappearance of a 14-year-old girl, made sharp oral observations questioning why Bokaro police repeatedly fail to make headway in cases involving missing girls and women. The court also raised concerns over the functioning of both former and current Bokaro Superintendents of Police, as well as the DSP concerned.

## 'No Vehicle Day' observed in Bihar

**Patna**

The impact of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to reduce the use of petrol and diesel is now clearly visible in Bihar's political landscape, with several leaders adopting alternative modes of transport to promote fuel conservation.

Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary marked 'No Vehicle Day' by walking from the Chief Minister's residence to the Secretariat in Patna nearby.

He was accompanied by officials from the Chief Minister's Secretariat and security personnel for the approximately 150 metre walk. Notably, the Chief Minister has already reduced the size of his convoy during official movements in Patna and nearby areas.

# Bhajanlal Sharma Calls for Mass Movement on Energy Conservation

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Friday urged citizens to transform energy conservation and fuel saving into a large-scale public movement driven by active people's participation.

**JAIPUR**

Addressing industry leaders, policymakers, and investors at the conclave, Sharma said Rajasthan has emerged as a leading state in solar energy production and is steadily strengthening its position as a major energy supplier in the country.

The Chief Minister described energy conservation as the most economical, effective, and sustainable alternative to increasing energy production. According to him, careful and disciplined consumption of resources is essential for achieving long-term energy self-reliance. He noted that responsible use of energy not only reduces costs but also helps protect the environment and strengthen national energy security.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Nation First vision, Sharma said the Rajasthan government is actively promoting fuel conservation measures across departments. He mentioned that guidelines have already been issued for the restrained use of government vehicles and broader implementation of energy-saving practices.

In a symbolic gesture supporting sustainable transportation, Sharma arrived at the event in an electric vehicle.

The move was intended to send a clear message about the importance of reducing fuel consumption, cutting carbon emissions, and encouraging the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies.

The Chief Minister strongly advocated the use of electric vehicles, saying they play a crucial role in reducing pollution and combating climate change. He stated that widespread EV adoption could significantly lower carbon emissions and contribute to environmental protection efforts while helping India reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.

Sharma emphasized that saving petrol and diesel has become a national necessity as the world faces rising energy demands and environmental concerns. He said future energy security can only be ensured through investment in clean, renewable, and alternative energy solutions.Inviting domestic and international investors to participate in Rajasthan's rapidly growing energy sector, Sharma said the state is moving quickly towards becoming a major energy powerhouse in line with the national vision of a Developed India by 2047. He assured industries and businesses that Rajasthan offers a highly investment-friendly environment backed by supportive government policies. The Chief Minister added that large-scale investment proposals in solar energy, wind power, bio-energy, pumped storage, and green hydrogen projects demonstrate growing confidence in Rajasthan's energy policies.

## BJP's anti-liquor protest march to J&K CM's house foiled

**SRINAGAR**

Some leaders and workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were detained by police on Friday in order to foil their protest march to the high security residence of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, against the sale of liquor in the Valley.

Some leaders and workers of the BJP assembled in the Ram Munshi Bagh area of Srinagar and started a protest march towards the high security Gupkar Road residence of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, against the sale of liquor in the Valley. J&K Police intervened and tried to disperse the protesters.

# 'Govt Limits Fuel Price Hike despite Oil Losses amid Global Crude Surge'

**NEW DELHI**

**The Central government's decision to raise petrol and diesel prices by only Rs 3 per litre is aimed at protecting consumers from the full impact of soaring global crude oil prices, senior officials said on Friday.**

According to government sources, the recent fuel price hike represents only a small fraction of the actual financial burden currently faced by state-owned oil marketing companies. Officials stated that under-recoveries on petrol are estimated at nearly Rs 26 per litre, while diesel under-recoveries have reached around Rs 82 per litre due to the sharp increase in global crude oil prices.

The government-owned oil companies Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum are reportedly sharing the burden along with the Centre. Officials indicated that together they are currently absorbing losses of nearly Rs 1,000 crore every day in order to shield consumers from sudden fuel price shocks.

Sources said the Centre's broader strategy is focused on balancing economic stability with consumer protection. A sharp rise in fuel prices could trigger widespread inflation across sectors by increasing transportation expenses, pushing up food prices, and placing additional pressure on household budgets at a time when domestic demand remains sensitive.

Government officials stressed that the intention is to avoid passing the entire burden of global oil price increases directly to citizens. Instead, authorities are attempting to soften the impact through controlled price adjustments while absorbing part of the financial losses through subsidies and public sector support. The Centre is also continuing efforts to protect the agriculture sector from rising international commodity prices. Sources said the government is already bearing a fertiliser subsidy burden estimated at around Rs 2.25 lakh crore to prevent higher input costs for farmers. Officials believe that protecting agriculture remains essential for maintaining food security and controlling inflation.According to sources, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been encouraging policies aimed at reducing fuel consumption and lowering India's dependence on imported energy rather than relying on steep retail fuel price hikes. The government's current approach focuses on improving energy efficiency and promoting gradual behavioural changes in fuel usage patterns.

Officials also highlighted concerns about India's rising import bill due to elevated crude oil and gold prices. Government estimates suggest that the country spends nearly Rs 12-15 lakh crore annually on crude oil imports. Every $10 increase in crude oil prices adds approximately $13-14 billion to India's import burden, significantly affecting the economy and trade balance.

*Amit Shah will inaugurate a fully automated milk processing and packaging plant of Madhur Dairy in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district on May 17.*

## Amit Shah to Inaugurate Madhur Dairy's Automated Milk Plant in Gujarat

**GANDHINAGAR**

The new plant has been established at Dashela village by the Gandhinagar District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Limited. According to officials, the facility has an initial milk processing capacity of 2.5 lakh litres per day, which can later be expanded to 5 lakh litres daily depending on future demand and procurement levels.

With the inauguration of the new facility, Madhur Dairy's total milk processing and packaging capacity will rise to 5 lakh litres per day, making it the largest cooperative milk union in Gandhinagar district. Officials believe the expansion will play an important role in strengthening the dairy cooperative network and supporting thousands of milk producers connected to the organisation.

Several senior leaders are expected to attend the inauguration programme along with Amit Shah. These include Bhupendra Patel, Shankar Chaudhary, Harsh Sanghavi, Jagdish Vishwakarma and Jitu Vaghani.

Officials stated that the expanded infrastructure will allow Madhur Dairy to process the entire milk procurement from dairy farmers in Gandhinagar district more efficiently. This is expected to benefit farmers by ensuring better and more stable prices for milk supplied to the cooperative.Consumers are also likely to gain from the expansion through improved availability of quality milk and a wider range of dairy products marketed under the Madhur and Amul brands. The increased production capacity will also support manufacturing requirements for the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, which oversees Amul's nationwide operations.

# Questions will be tougher this time: Students on NEET-UG 2026 re-examination

**JODHPUR**

After the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the re-examination date for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) 2026, students expressed the fear that the questions would be tougher to crack this time as that usually happens after a paper leak. They stated that it would require them to be mentally stronger and prepare even harder than before, for the test.

Amrit Gehlot expressed the hope that the paper leak incident would not get repeated when the exam is held again.

If the paper gets leaked again then we will stand to lose a year.

We will again have to bear the financial burden of travelling, rent and attending coaching classes.

Gehlot further said that such instances are particularly difficult for students who belong to Economically Weaker Sections. Our parents are still hopeful for us, he said.

Expressing his apprehensions he said: We have prepared well but due to this leak this time the questions might be more difficult.

Another student, Yogita, added: Our confidence took a blow when the news of the leak came out.

She further said that even though the exam is being held again, the confidence and hope are not the same as before.

NEET aspirant Varsha mentioned that this time the students have to make themselves mentally stronger and prepare harder.

It will be difficult mentally but still we have to do it. More so because whenever an exam is held for the second time, the questions are tougher, she said.

Another student, Akshit Kumar said: The last exam had gone well for me but I was disappointed after coming to know that the paper had been leaked.He said that many students were even aiming for a perfect score after comparing their responses in the exam with the answer key. Kumar also expressed disappointment with the NTA, saying the agency should have been more careful since the irregularities in the exam have taken place repeatedly.

## Calls for pilot vehicles reduced in two days after fuel-saving measures implemented

**GANDHINAGAR**

The Gujarat government has reported a reduction in pilot vehicle calls to the Home Department over the last two days after introducing measures linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation and reduced official travel.Ahead of the Cabinet meeting on Friday, Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi said the decline in pilot vehicle deployments had already resulted in significant savings in fuel usage and manpower, as the state administration intensified efforts to curb unnecessary movement.

Overall, there has been a reduction of 126 calls in two days, Sanghavi said while responding to questions on the impact of the new measures.

He said that even by conservative estimates, the reduction could translate into savings of around 5,000 kilometres of petrol and diesel consumption.

If we take an average of 25 to 50 kilometres for each call, then at least 5,000 kilometres.

**GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA**
**MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**
**M.I & G.W.D.D. DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR**

No.EE/MID/VJP/AE-1,2,3,4/4702,2702&4711/TND/2026-27/484 Date:14.05.2026

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**

The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department, Division Vijayapur invites work tenders through "E-Procurement" from eligible contractor on item rate Tender for following works as per KTPP Act-2000 and latest amendments.

**4702 Major Works :-** Total 3 Works, Amount put to Tender **Rs.242.08 Lakhs**, **Tender Period for the above work is Six(6) Months including monsoon.**

**4711 Flood Protection Works :-** Total 1 Work, Amount put to Tender **Rs.40.25 Lakhs**, **Tender Period for the above work is Three(3) Months including monsoon.**

**4702 SCP Works :-** Total 8 Works/Package Works, Amount put to Tender **Rs.165.12 Lakhs**, **Tender Period for the above works are Three(3) Months to Six(6) Months including monsoon.**

**4702 TSP Works :-** Total 1 Work, Amount put to Tender **Rs.3.60 Lakhs**, **Tender Period for the above work is Three(3) Months including monsoon.**

**2702 M&R Works :-** Total 1 Work, Amount put to Tender **Rs.33.89 Lakhs**, **Tender Period for the above work is Six(6) Months including monsoon.**

**4702 Consultancy Works :-** Total 1 Work, Amount put to Tender **Rs.1.81 Lakhs**, **Tender Period for the above work is One(1) Month including monsoon.**

Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka E-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home under login for Contractors from **15.05.2026.** Tenders may be submitted on electronically in E-Procurement portal up to **17-30 hrs.** on **22.05.2026.** Interested contractors information regarding works may be obtained from this office or e-Procurement helpdesk (Ph.No.080-25501216 & 080-25501227) upto **17-30 hrs.** on **21.05.2026.** Pre-bid meeting will be held on **19.05.2026** for work costing above 1.00 Crore in the office of the Executive Engineer, MI&GWDD Division, Vijayapur. Tenders shall be quoted without adding GST and other details can be seen in the tender documents.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,**
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/96/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2026–27 **MI & GWDD Division, Vijayapur**

Government of Karnataka
**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI**

No : EE/PRED/KLB/KKRDB /TS-1/2026-27/449 Date : 14/05/2026

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**

**(Through E-procurement Two Cover System)**

1) Name of work: 1. Construction of road from Honnal railway bridge to Biral Road in Jewargi Taluka Indent No.26370, 2. Development Of Overall CC Roads And Drains In General Oni At Tonchi Village In Chittapur Taluka Indent No.17273, 3. Development of Overall CC Roads and Drains at General Ward of Aloor village in Chittapur Taluka Indent No.17239, 4. Repairs to road from Malkood village to laxmi temple in Chittapur Taluka Indent No.24900, 5. Improvements to Road from Hulgol approach road (balance work) and Improvements to Road from Mudhol-Medak main road towards Gaddameda Tanda in Sedam Taluka Indent No.17821, 6. Development work of Kambaleshwar Math at Chittapur town in Chittapur taluka Indent No.26053, 7. Improvements to road and construction of CD from Ijeri village to Syed Peer Darga in Yadrami Taluka Indent No19490, 8. Development work of Siddalingeshwar Kattimani Hiremath at Mugulnagaon Village in Chittapur Taluka Indent No.25881, 2) Head of account: CMIDP / 5054, 3) Amount put to tender: **Minimum Rs. 58,30,895.01, Maximum Rs. 1,27,00,300.38,** 4) Class of Contractor: Class-III and Above, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **14-05-2026 to 29-05-2026 upto 4.00 pm**, 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: Minimum Rs. 58,500.00, Maximum Rs. 2,00,000.00, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **14-05-2026 to 29-05-2026 upto 4.00 pm**, 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **30-05-2026 After 4.00 pm,** 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **02-06-2026 After 11.00 am**, 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, Rajapur Kalaburagi, 12) Website Address : www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**
DIPR/Kalaburagi/120/KSMC&A/2026-27 **Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi**

MODI'S FIVE-NATION VISIT

# *BJP Leaders Back PM Modi's Five-Nation Tour*

**NEW DELHI**

Leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party on Friday expressed confidence that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ongoing five-nation tour will strengthen India's diplomatic position and help address the global fuel crisis triggered by tensions in West Asia.

Prime Minister Modi's foreign tour, scheduled from May 15 to May 20, includes visits to the United Arab Emirates, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy. The visit aims to strengthen India's partnerships in several

key sectors, including energy, defence, trade, technology, and green transition initiatives.

Speaking about the significance of the tour, BJP Member of Parliament Praveen Khandelwal said the Prime Minister's visit comes at an important time amid rising global tensions and uncertainty in energy markets. He stated that Modi would strongly present India's perspective during discussions with foreign leaders, further enhancing India's global standing and influence.

Khandelwal added that India's diplomatic role on the world stage has become increasingly important under Modi's leadership and that the tour would reinforce the country's strategic relationships with major international partners.

Bihar minister Ram Kripal Yadav highlighted the importance of the UAE in India's foreign policy, noting that a large number of Indians live and work there.

# Priyanka Raises Concern Over NEET Aspirant's Death After Exam Cancellation

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said repeated irregularities and corruption in competitive examinations are pushing students into severe mental distress.

**LUCKNOW**

According to the student's family, Ritik Mishra had appeared for the NEET-UG examination in Kanpur on May 3 and had returned home hopeful about his performance. However, after the examination was cancelled following allegations of a paper leak, he reportedly became mentally distressed and anxious about his future.

Priyanka Gandhi, in a post on social media platform X, conveyed condolences to the bereaved family and said the incident highlighted the enormous emotional burden being faced by lakhs of students preparing for competitive examinations across the country.

She stated that repeated incidents of exam irregularities and paper leaks were destroying the futures of young aspirants every year. Referring to the family's claims, she said Ritik had reportedly been under intense stress after the cancellation of the examination and questioned how long such incidents would continue without accountability.

The 22-year-old student allegedly died by suicide at his residence in Lakhimpur Kheri. Local authorities have launched an investigation into

the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The controversy erupted after the National Testing Agency cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on May 3 following allegations of question paper leaks from multiple centres. The examination is now scheduled to be reconducted on June 21.

The investigation into the alleged paper leak has been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation. The agency is probing how the question paper was leaked and distributed before the examination. Officials said several raids have been conducted across different states as part of the ongoing investigation.

So far, seven individuals have reportedly been arrested in connection with the alleged leak racket.

Investigators are examining possible links between organised groups and those involved in circulating the examination paper illegally.

The controversy has intensified concerns about the credibility and security of large-scale competitive examinations in India.

Students, parents, and education experts have increasingly demanded stronger safeguards to prevent leaks and ensure fair evaluation systems.

Amid growing criticism, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced on Friday that NEET would shift to a computer-based examination format from next year.

## QUICK READ

### IIT Roorkee Develops High-Resolution Climate Dataset

**New Delhi**

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee on Friday developed and released an open-access high-resolution climate projection dataset, named INDRA-CMIP6, aimed at helping India improve regional climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and climate risk assessment. Developed by researchers from the Department of Hydrology at IIT Roorkee and published in the journal Nature Portfolio's 'Scientific Data', the dataset provides daily rainfall and temperature projections for the Indian subcontinent at a spatial resolution of nearly 10 kilometres. The initiative seeks to address a major challenge associated with global climate models, whose coarse-scale projections often fail to accurately represent India's complex terrain, monsoon systems, and regional.

### More Than 12 Lakh Pilgrims Undertake Char Dham Yatra

**Dehradun**

The Char Dham Yatra, one of the most sacred pilgrimages for Hindus, is witnessing a record surge in the number of devotees visiting the four holy shrine Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri. Devotees are arriving in droves, with as many as 80,000 in a single day. The pilgrimage committee has pegged the total number of pilgrims visiting the Char Dham at 12.62 lakh till May 14. Notably, the portals of Gangotri and Yamunotri temples were opened on April 19 amid the chanting of Vedic hymns, while those of Kedarnath and Badrinath shrines opened on April 22 and April 23.

### CBI Court Gives 7-Year Jail To Ex-BOI Manager In Fraud Case

**Bhopal**

A Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court in Bhopal has sentenced a former Senior Branch Manager of Bank of India (BOI) and a private individual to seven years of Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) in connection with a bank fraud case involving fraudulent sanction and diversion of loan funds, officials said on Friday. The convicted accused have been identified as Piyush Chaturvedi, the then Senior Branch Manager of Bank of India's Misrod branch in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and Mohan Singh Solanki, a private person. According to the CBI, the special court also imposed a total fine of Rs 60,000 on the two convicts. The case was registered by the CBI on January 25, 2016.

### EAM Holds Talks with Counterparts From Malaysia, Uganda And Cuba

**NEW DELHI**

Deepening cooperation across various sectors, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Friday held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from participating countries on the sidelines of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi.

EAM met his Malaysian counterpart, Mohamad Hasan, with both sides reviewing the progress of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations. The two leaders also discussed the follow-up on the outcomes from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Malaysia in February this year.

Sharing the details of the meeting on X, EAM posted: Always good to meet FM Mohamad Hasan of Malaysia. Reviewed the progress.

# Kiren Rijiju Seeks Clarity on Rahul Gandhi's Foreign Trips and Funding Sources

**NEW DELHI**

Speaking to the media, Rijiju stated that all Members of Parliament are required to follow specific protocols before travelling abroad. According to him, lawmakers must inform the Secretariat of either the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha at least three weeks in advance before undertaking foreign visits. He said the rules are important from both administrative and security perspectives.The Union Minister remarked that the questions surrounding Rahul Gandhi's foreign travel had become significant because of concerns regarding transparency and compliance with parliamentary procedures. He also described the alleged lack of disclosure regarding some overseas visits as worrisome.

The controversy intensified after BJP MP Sambit Patra accused Rahul Gandhi of having a mismatch between his declared income and the estimated expenditure incurred on foreign travel over the past two decades. Patra claimed that while the Congress leader had declared income of around Rs 11 crore, he had allegedly spent nearly Rs 60 crore on 54 foreign trips across several countries in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.Rijiju said that if the expenses incurred during foreign travel exceed the income declared in election affidavits, the matter naturally becomes important for tax authorities to examine. He added that whether the funds involved were disclosed or undisclosed, all such expenditures should be properly accounted for.

The minister maintained that answers regarding the source of funding should come directly from the Indian National Congress. He said transparency is necessary, especially for public representatives who are expected to maintain accountability in both financial and official matters.

When asked about reports suggesting secrecy surrounding some of Rahul Gandhi's visits abroad, Rijiju stressed that every Parliamentarian is expected to follow established procedures without exception. He said MPs are required to disclose the purpose of their travel, destinations visited, and official engagements undertaken during such visits.

Referring to destinations such as Muscat, Thailand, and Vietnam, Rijiju said public representatives should clearly explain why they travelled, whom they met, and whether proper protocols were followed. He noted that ministers and MPs from the ruling side also disclose details of their official foreign visits. The latest controversy gained attention after reports regarding Rahul Gandhi's alleged visit to Oman earlier this month.

**Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday backed the Bharatiya Janata Party's demand for transparency regarding Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's foreign trips and the alleged funding behind them.**

# Man Kills Brother-In-Law with Sharp Weapon, Stone in Ranchi; Arrested

**RANCHI**

A 50-year-old man was allegedly murdered by his brother-in-law with a sharp-edged weapon and a stone following a domestic dispute in Jharkhand's Ranchi district, police said on Friday.

The shocking incident took place in Nichetoli village under the Tamar police station limits. The deceased has been identified as Gajendra Singh, a resident of Runia village in neighbouring Khunti district.

According to police, Gajendra had arrived at his in-laws' house along with his wife. Trouble reportedly began after the accused, identified as Bhupesh Khandit, allegedly took control of all the household utensils and refused to allow cooking at the house, insisting that the guests return to their village as he did not want them there.

The dispute escalated on Friday morning when Bhupesh's younger sister asked him for utensils to prepare food for the family and fetch water. During the heated argument with his sister during which Bhupesh refused to give the utensils, he allegedly attacked Gajendra repeatedly with a 'Dauli', a locally used sharp-edged weapon, police said.

The accused then allegedly smashed Gajendra's head with a large stone lying in the courtyard, killing him on the spot.Police said Bhupesh's younger sister also suffered minor injuries while trying to intervene and save her husband.

# Assam CM Promises Expanded Development Push After NDA's Victory

**GUWAHATI**

Addressing reporters after the election results, Sarma said the overwhelming public support had significantly increased the government's responsibility towards the people of Assam.

He stated that the strong mandate reflected public confidence in the work carried out by the government over the past five years and added that the administration would now work with even greater commitment to accelerate development across the state.

According to the Chief Minister, the new government's vision for Assam would be much larger than the agenda presented during the 2021 Assembly elections.

He pointed out that the earlier elections had taken place during the difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had forced the government to focus on more immediate and limited priorities.

Sarma said the state government now has more experience and confidence after implementing several welfare programmes, infrastructure projects, and investment initiatives during its previous term. He added that the administration intends to use this experience to expand development efforts and deliver more comprehensive results for the people.

The Chief Minister stressed that the BJP-led alliance would focus on converting election promises into practical outcomes while ensuring that development benefits reach all sections of society.

He said the government had committed to undertaking more work than during its previous tenure and expressed confidence that those promises would be implemented effectively on the ground.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led NDA registered a decisive victory in the elections, significantly weakening opposition parties across the state. Political analysts described the result as a major endorsement of the ruling alliance's governance model and development narrative.

Sarma also highlighted the government's achievements in sectors such as road infrastructure, healthcare, education, industrial investment, and connectivity. He claimed Assam has witnessed rapid transformation in recent years due to large-scale development projects and improved administrative efficiency.

The Chief Minister said infrastructure expansion and welfare delivery would remain key priorities for the government in its new term. He added that improving employment opportunities, attracting investments, and strengthening public services would also receive major attention.

The NDA government has consistently promoted its record in improving law and order, expanding transport networks, and implementing social welfare schemes as some of its major accomplishments.

# Thief Caught Red-Handed Stealing From Siddhivinayak Temple Donation Box

**MUMBAI**

A thief was caught red-handed on Friday morning while allegedly stealing money from the donation box at the famous Siddhivinayak Temple located in the Dombivli MIDC residential area, police officials said. The incident took place at around 6.34 A.M. and the entire act was captured on CCTV cameras installed inside the temple premises.

According to information, the accused entered the temple pretending to be a devotee coming to offer prayers. After spending some time inside the temple, he allegedly used a thin wooden stick coated with glue to pull currency notes out of the donation box without drawing attention from people around him.

Temple authorities later noticed suspicious activity while monitoring the CCTV footage. Acting promptly, temple treasurer Chandrashekhar Shinde, along with devotee Pandurang Ude, who had come to the

temple for darshan early in the morning, confronted the accused and caught him on the spot before he could flee.

The accused was subsequently handed over to the Manpada Police station for further investigation and legal action.

Police sources said the accused had already managed to remove a considerable amount of cash from the donation box before being apprehended. Officials are currently questioning him to determine whether he was involved in similar theft incidents in the area in the past.

The Siddhivinayak Temple is regarded as a major centre of faith for residents of the Dombivli MIDC locality and attracts a large number of devotees every day, especially during morning and evening prayer hours.

Following the incident, local residents praised the alertness and courage shown by Chandrashekhar Shinde and Pandurang Ude in catching the accused.

Residents also expressed concern over the growing incidents of theft and house break-ins in the locality and urged the police administration to increase patrolling and strengthen security arrangements in the area to prevent such crimes in future.

**MAJOR AEROSPACE LAUNCH**

# *Def Min Launches Major Aerospace and Defence Projects*

**PUTTAPARTHI**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday laid the foundation stone for several major aerospace and defence projects in Andhra Pradesh, including the Aircraft Integration and Flight Test Centre of the Aeronautical Development Agency. The projects, launched in Sri Sathya Sai district and other locations in the state, are aimed at strengthening India's defence manufacturing capabilities and boosting indigenous aerospace development.

Rajnath Singh participated in the groundbreaking ceremony along with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The event marked the launch of multiple strategic projects, including facilities related to naval systems, defence energetics, ammunition production, and drone technology infrastructure.

One of the most significant projects announced was the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme being developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency under the Defence Research and Development Organisation. The AMCA project will function as the core centre for integration, development, and flight testing of India's indigenous fifth-generation fighter aircraft programme.

The AMCA facility is estimated to cost around Rs 15,803 crore and is expected to create employment opportunities for nearly 7,500 people over the course of the project. Officials stated that the initiative will significantly enhance India's self-reliance in advanced combat aviation technologies, including stealth systems, sophisticated avionics, and integrated warfare capabilities.

Spread across nearly 650 acres in Puttaparthi, the proposed complex will serve as a national hub for aircraft integration, validation, flight testing, and certification activities. The facility is expected to strengthen India's strategic aerospace infrastructure while reducing dependence on foreign testing and development systems.

In addition to the AMCA project, the foundation stone was also laid for a new naval systems manufacturing facility of Bharat Dynamics Limited at T. Sirasapalli in Anakapalli district. Groundbreaking ceremonies were also conducted.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Forest Department)
**Office of the Assistant Conservator of Forest & Deputy Director, Children Park Cum Mini Zoo, Kalaburagi**
Office Phone No.08472-256601 e-mail: dcf_tgulbarga@yahoo.co.in

No.DD/ZOO/OUTSOURCE/E-Tender/2026-27/ Date : 07.05.2026

**SHORT TENDER NOTIFICATION**

01) Detail of Work : Supply of Employees through Out Source & New Zoological park Madbol Kalaburagi ,02) Budget Head : **ZAK**, 03) Amount of Estimate : Mini (in Lakhs) : 4.750, Max (in Lakhs) : 68.093. 04) Eligibility of Contractor /firm: As per tender documents, 05) Details of Tender application Amount and EMD Amount : Tender Fee & EMD As per Tender Document , 6) Last Date & Time for Tender Queries / Clarifications : 22.05.2026 up to 4.00 Pm, 7) Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tender 29.05.2026 upto 4.30 Pm, 8) Date & Time for opening of Technical Bid : 30.05.2026 after 5.30 PM, 9) Date & Time for Opening of Financial Bid : 01.06.2026 after 11.00 AM, 10) Add.Information : Assistant Conservator of Forest & Deputy Director Children Park cum mini Zoo, Kalaburagi , 11) Address of E-Portal : http:kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Assistant Conservator of Forest
& Deputy Director Children Park
Cum Mini Zoo, Kalaburagi

DIPR/Kalaburagi/125/Deshpande Publicity//2026-27/

QUICK READ

## Congo, Rwanda head for showdown over Francophonie top job

**DAKAR**

Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda are heading for a diplomatic battle over the leadership of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), with both fielding rival candidates as fighting grinds on in eastern Congo. Friday is the deadline to submit candidacies for the position of secretary general of the OIF, which represents more than 320 million French speakers worldwide and brings together 90 states and governments. The diplomatic contest is unfolding amid continued clashes between Congo and the Rwanda-backed AFC/M23 rebels, who seized control of the eastern cities of Goma and Bukavu in early 2025.

# Trump Leaves China Without Major Trade Gains or Iran Breakthrough

U.S. President Trump concluded his two-day visit to China on Friday without securing major trade agreements or concrete assistance from Beijing in addressing the ongoing Iran conflict

**BEIJING**

Trump's visit marked the first trip by a sitting U.S. president to China since his previous visit in 2017. The visit was widely seen as an attempt to strengthen economic cooperation and improve Trump's domestic political standing ahead of crucial midterm elections in the United States. However, analysts noted that the meetings yielded more symbolic gestures than substantive policy achievements.

The summit featured grand displays of diplomacy, including military ceremonies, cultural tours, and high-level banquets. Trump repeatedly praised Xi's leadership and hospitality during the visit, describing the meetings as incredible and saying that a lot of good has come of it. The leaders held their final discussions at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing, where they shared a formal lunch and discussed bilateral relations and international concerns.

Behind the scenes, however, serious strategic tensions remained unresolved. Chinese officials reportedly warned the United States against any actions involving Taiwan that could increase regional instability. Taiwan continues to be one of Beijing's most sensitive geopolitical concerns, and Xi is said to have cautioned Trump that mishandling the issue could lead to serious conflict.

Trade discussions also failed to deliver major breakthroughs. Trump had hoped to secure immediate economic victories, including aircraft deals involving Boeing, but no major announcements emerged from the summit. Instead, Xi focused on promoting long-term stability in U.S.-China trade relations and reducing tensions between the two global powers.

The ongoing conflict involving Iran also dominated discussions. Before Friday's talks, China's foreign ministry released a statement criticizing the war and calling for peace negotiations. The ministry stated that the conflict should never have happened and emphasized the importance of restoring global economic stability, particularly in energy markets affected by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump later stated that both leaders shared similar views regarding Iran, though Chinese officials stopped short of offering specific commitments. The United States had reportedly hoped China would use its influence over Iran to encourage a diplomatic settlement.

However, experts believe Beijing is unlikely to pressure Tehran aggressively because Iran remains an important strategic partner for China in balancing U.S. influence globally.

Foreign policy analysts observed that while both nations expressed support for stability and open trade routes, the summit lacked concrete agreements on Iran or broader geopolitical cooperation.

# Hantavirus Outbreak Sparks Widespread Online Panic

**LONDON**

**An outbreak of the Andes strain of hantavirus aboard a quarantined luxury cruise ship in the Atlantic has reignited fears reminiscent of the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting health authorities worldwide to carefully manage public communication.**

The outbreak aboard the MV Hondius cruise ship has drawn widespread attention after several passengers reportedly died and others fell ill. The Andes strain of hantavirus, a rodent-borne disease known to cause severe respiratory illness, has alarmed many people due to its unfamiliar name and the memories it evokes of the early days of COVID-19.

Public health agencies are now attempting to strike a careful balance between informing citizens and preventing unnecessary fear. Officials say the virus is not new, and experts currently believe the chances of it triggering a pandemic are low. However, uncertainties surrounding the disease and rare instances of human-to-human transmission have increased public anxiety on social media platforms.

The health department in the U.S. state of Illinois recently addressed growing concerns through an online information campaign. In a social media post, the department urged people to avoid panic and read verified information before spreading fear among friends and family. The message reflected a broader strategy by health authorities to communicate more transparently and empathetically than they did during the COVID crisis.

According to health experts, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed major weaknesses in global public communication systems. Governments were often criticized for delayed responses, inconsistent policies, confusing health advice, and contradictory messaging regarding lockdowns, vaccines, and travel restrictions. These failures contributed to a decline in public trust toward health institutions in many countries.

Gianfranco Spiteri, emergencies lead at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, said communication planning now occupies a significant part of the response effort. Officials are trying to explain why the hantavirus outbreak deserves attention while also reassuring people that the overall public threat remains limited.

Spiteri acknowledged the difficulties health agencies face in managing public perception. Some critics believe authorities are exaggerating the situation, while others argue officials are not taking the outbreak seriously enough. He stressed that all public messaging is being based strictly on available scientific evidence.

Despite those efforts, misinformation continues to spread rapidly online.

# Russia and Ukraine swap 205 prisoners of war each

**KYIV/MOSCOW**

Russia and Ukraine swapped 205 prisoners of war each on Friday, part of an agreement linked to a three-day ceasefire earlier this month brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said it was the first step in a bigger prisoner of war swap, after Kyiv and Moscow had agreed to swap 1,000 POWs each under the terms of the agreement.

205 Ukrainians are home. Most of them had been in Russian captivity since 2022, Zelenskiy said on the Telegram app, posting pictures of smiling servicemen, many wrapped in Ukrainian flags.

Standing near a bus together with other soldiers and wrapped in the blue-and-yellow national flag, Yevhen Yeremenko, a serviceman, said he was happy to return after waiting for his freedom for four years.

It's a great pity it took so long. But some boys remain there. They are waiting and hoping. They hope that their motherland will get them out of there, he told Reuters as he devoured an apple. We must bring them back. Four years are difficult. Do not forget them! Ukraine's HUR military intelligence said that many of the returned servicemen had been held captive after the months-long defence of Mariupol, a southeastern port city that fell to Russia in 2022.

HUR said Kyiv had managed to bring home several dozen officers in addition to soldiers and sergeants. The two sides also conducted an exchange of those killed in the fighting, with Russia handing 526 bodies to Ukraine and receiving 41 in return.

# Zelenskiy condemns Russia after strike on Kyiv apartment

**KYIV**

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy called on Friday for Moscow to be punished after laying red roses at the rubble of a Kyiv apartment building where a Russian missile strike killed 24 people, including three children.

Rescue workers ended search operations at the devastated building, which was struck this week during Russia's heaviest air attack on the Ukrainian capital this year.

Our first responders, worked non-stop for more than a day, Zelenskiy said on the Telegram app after visiting the site of the attack in Kyiv's Darnytskyi district, on the left bank of the Dnipro river, placing flowers and talking to rescue workers. The Russians practically levelled an entire section of the building with their missile, he said.

Russia, which began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, launched more than 1,500 drones and dozens of missiles in attacks across Ukraine this week over two consecutive days, Ukrainian officials said. Six people were killed in the attacks on Wednesday in western Ukraine, far from the front line.

A Russia like this can never be normalized; a Russia that deliberately destroys lives and hopes to remain unpunished. Pressure is needed, Zelenskiy said, reiterating appeals to allies to help Ukraine strengthen its air defences.

Kyiv officials announced a day of mourning on Friday to honour the victims, with national flags at half-mast across the city of three million people. All entertainment events were cancelled or postponed.

The Interior Ministry said the search and rescue operation at apartment building lasted more than 28 hours and hundreds of rescuers sifted through 3,000 cubic meters of rubble.

City officials said 24 bodies had been recovered from the rubble and about 30 people had been rescued alive. Nearly 50 people were wounded, and about 400 people required psychological support, the interior ministry said.

Zelenskiy has said that, according to initial analysis, a recently manufactured Russian Kh-101 missile struck the building.

# US PLANS TO INDICT CUBA'S RAUL CASTRO, US DOJ OFFICIAL SAYS

**WASHINTON**

The United States plans to indict Cuba's Raul Castro, a U.S. Department of Justice official said. The timing of the potential indictment, which would need to be approved by a grand jury, was not immediately clear, but the official said it sounds imminent.

The potential indictment of the 94-year-old former president of Cuba and brother of Fidel is expected to focus on the downing of aircraft, the official said on condition of anonymity. CBS previously reported that the case relates to Cuba's deadly 1996 shootdown of planes operated by humanitarian group Brothers to the Rescue.

Representatives for Cuba's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside of normal business hours.

A U.S. Justice Department spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump's administration has called Cuba's current communist-run government corrupt and incompetent and is seeking to replace it.

# Australian court upholds ruling for transgender woman

**SYDNEY**

An Australian court upheld a landmark decision for a transgender woman on Friday, ruling that her exclusion from a female-only app because she appeared to be a man amounted to an act of discrimination.

The Full Federal Court of Australia also doubled damages against the Giggle for Girls app and its founder and CEO, Sall Grover, saying that the blocking of transgender woman Roxanne Tickle's account was direct discrimination. A lower court found in 2024 that it was an act of indirect discrimination.

Both findings have been hailed as groundbreaking decisions on gender identity and transgender rights in Australia.

I'm very pleased by the outcome of my case, and I hope that it assists trans and gender diverse people and their loved ones to heal, Tickle told reporters outside the courthouse.

I've brought my case to show trans people that you can be brave and that you can stand up for yourself. In the process, I surprised myself at how brave I could be, she said. Lawyers for Grover did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Grover, in posts on X, said she was devastated by the ruling, but flagged she would appeal to the High Court, Australia's top court.

Australia's Sex Discrimination Act prohibits providers of goods or services from discriminating against people on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and marital status. Tickle's case was the first to legally test the gender identity protections, which were added in 2013.

The court's decision represents a significant affirmation of protections for trans people, said Alice Taylor, an assistant professor of law at Bond University.

STARMER LEADERSHIP CRISIS

# *Starmer Faces Leadership Crisis After Sr Min Resigns*

**LONDON**

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is facing mounting pressure over his leadership after senior cabinet minister Wes Streeting resigned from the government, accusing Starmer of lacking vision and direction.

The political crisis comes less than two years after Starmer led the Labour Party to a large parliamentary majority on promises of stability and competent governance after years of political turbulence in Britain. However, the party's poor performance in recent local elections has shaken confidence among lawmakers and party supporters, leading to growing questions about Starmer's future as leader.

Wes Streeting, who served as health minister, became the first senior member of Starmer's government to resign openly over concerns about the prime minister's leadership. In his resignation letter, Streeting stated that it had become clear Starmer would not lead Labour into the next general election. He argued that the party needed a broader debate about its future direction and leadership.

Streeting's criticism of Starmer was unusually direct. He accused the prime minister of allowing political drift to replace clear leadership at a time when the party needed strong vision and decisive action. According to Streeting, Labour was facing a vacuum where leadership and direction should exist. He also suggested that responsibility for political setbacks had too often fallen on others rather than the party leadership itself.

Although Streeting stopped short of launching a formal leadership challenge, political observers believe his resignation could encourage others within Labour to step forward. Reports indicate that several prominent figures are already positioning themselves in case a contest emerges. Among them is Andy Burnham, whose growing visibility has fuelled speculation about possible future ambitions.

A source close to Streeting reportedly said the former minister has enough support among lawmakers to mount a leadership campaign if necessary. However, the source added that Streeting would prefer Starmer to announce an orderly transition timetable rather than force an immediate internal battle.

Starmer responded quickly by expressing regret over Streeting's departure and defending his leadership. In a public statement, he argued that Labour still faced an important national mission and called on party members to unite against what he described as political chaos. He also moved swiftly to stabilize his government by appointing James Murray as the new health minister.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, NAGARAJ SHELAGI S/o SABANNA SHELAGI R/o 424/C, Shanthinikethan Colony, Behind Sana College, Bhairidevara Koppa, Amargol, Amragol, Hubli, Dharwad, Karnataka-580025, have changed the name of my minor son NIHAL NAGARAJ SHELAGI aged 15 years and he shall hereafter be known as SANJITH NAGARAJ SHELAGI.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, SUDHAKARAN S/o PERUMAYYA R/o 4366 P Block, 11, 2nd Floor, Mahalaxmi Nagar, AWHO, JJAY, Neelkantan Vihar, Belgaum, Benakanhalli, Belagavi, Karnataka 591108, have changed the name of my minor son TANISHQ. S.P alias TANISHQ S P aged 12 years and he shall hereafter be known as TANISHQ SATHYADEVAN.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, **NAVUZIYA**, W/o. Syedali, Resident of No.79/A, Ground Floor, 8th Main, Rasheediya Masjid Near Crescent Harmony Apartment, Govindpur, A C Post, Bengaluru-560045, have changed my name to **NOWZIYANADIMI,** Vide Affidavit Dated: 15.05.2026 before notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

**Form No. INC-26**

[Pursuant to rule 30 the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]
Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of Registered office of the company from one state to another
Before the Central Government
South Western Region
In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014
AND
In the matter of **M/S DIGITECH LAUNDRY PRIVATE LIMITED** having its registered office at BINDHUSHREE ARCADE, No. 49, OPP. R.N.S. COLLEGE, UTTARAHALLI, CHENNASANDRA, Bangalore, BENGALURU, Karnataka, India, 560098
--------Petitioner
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting/ Extra ordinary general meeting held on **13/04/2026** BINDHUSHREE ARCADE, No. 49, OPP. R.N.S. COLLEGE, UTTARAHALLI, CHENNASANDRA, Bangalore, BENGALURU, Karnataka, India, 560098 to enable the company to change its Registered Office Shifted from the State of Karnataka ROC –Bangalore to State of Tamil Nadu ROC - Chennai.
Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the South Western Regional Director at the address 'E' Wing, 2nd Floor, KendriyaSadana, Kormangala, Bangalore-560034, Karnataka., Bangalore within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company with a copy of the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:
For and on behalf of the **DIGITECH LAUNDRY PRIVATE LIMITED**
**SHEIKHBABUNOORUDDIN**
**(03065464)**
**(Additional Director)**
**SARDAR IRSHAD AHMED**
**(11081888)**
**(Additional Director)**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, HEMAKSHAMMA ESWARAPPA W/o ESWARAPPA S, R/o 672, A-Block, 3rd Cross, 3rd Main, Near Ganesha Temple, Sahakaranagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560092, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as HEMALATHA.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, DINESH C S/o CHAINRAJ M D, R/o 140/3, 2nd Main 2nd Cross, Opp Sri Rama Park, P J Extension, Davanagere, Jayadeva Circle-Davanagere, Karnataka-577002, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as DINESH MEHTA.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, **PADARTHI HARSHITHA**, W/o. HEMANTH KRISHNA, Resident of No.17, 2ND Cross, Satyanarayanapet, Bellary, -583101 have changed my name to **K HARSHITHA**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 15.05.2026 before notary SATISH KUMAR .K, Bellary.

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To Place Classifed ad
Contact : 080-41209042

# Hockey India launches HIL 2027 player registration

Hockey India has opened registrations for the 2027 HIL auction, attracting top domestic and international hockey stars

**NEW DELHI**

Hockey India has officially opened player registrations for the upcoming Hero Hockey India League (HIL) 2027 player auction. The registrations began, ahead of the highly anticipated player auction scheduled to take place in September 2026.

Following the massive success of the league's recent revival, the 2027 edition is set to run in January 2027. The tournament will bring together elite domestic and international hockey stars. Eligible male and female athletes from top hockey-playing nations including the Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, Argentina, and Germany are invited to register for the global showpiece.

The league has seen immense growth, featuring eight men's and four women's franchises. Last season, over 1,000 players registered for the auction, highlighting the tournament's massive global appeal. The previous edition saw thrilling action on the field, with SG Pipers clinching the Women's HIL 2026 title and Vedanta Kalinga Lancers emerging as the men's champions.

Hockey India President Dr. Dilip Tirkey expressed his excitement, stating that the global response reflects the league's growing stature. He emphasized that the tournament provides invaluable top-level exposure while strengthening India's hockey ecosystem.

Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh echoed these sentiments, encouraging all eligible players to join the competition. With preparations fully underway, the HIL 2027 promises to deliver world-class action, offering a spectacular platform for both emerging talent and established international icons to showcase their skills at the absolute highest level.

# Sakshi beats World Champion Meenakshi in final

**Sakshi Chaudhary secured her Commonwealth and Asian Games spots after stunning world champions Nikhat Zareen and Meenakshi Hooda in the national boxing trials**

**PATIALA**

Shaking up Indian boxing, Sakshi Chaudhary secured her spot in the national squad for both the upcoming Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. The rising star produced a dominant performance to defeat reigning world champion Meenakshi Hooda in the 51kg final at NIS Patiala.

Sakshi's historic victory caps off a sensational run in the national trials. Just a day prior, she pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the sport by knocking out two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen in the semifinals. Facing Meenakshi, the current 48kg world champion who moved up a weight class, Sakshi relied on her sharp movement and precise tactical skills to win by a unanimous 5-0 decision.

The results ensure a brand-new representative for India in the highly competitive 51kg category, as established stars like Nikhat and former world champion Nitu Ghanghas has both crashed out. By finishing as the runner-up, Meenakshi will now represent India at the upcoming World Boxing Cup in China this June.

Meanwhile, Sakshi earns direct passage to represent the nation at two massive quadrennial events later this year. She will pack her bags for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, running from July 23 to August 2. Immediately following that, she will fly out to spearhead India's medal hopes at the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, scheduled from September 19 to October 4. Other prominent boxers, including Sachin Siwach and Preeti Pawar, have also locked in their dual qualifications.

# Furious Real Madrid fans clash with President Perez

**MADRID**

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez was caught in a heated verbal altercation with supporters during his team's 2-0 La Liga victory over Real Oviedo. The shocking incident highlights the growing toxic atmosphere brewing inside the historic Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

Television cameras captured a frustrated Perez aggressively arguing with spectators situated directly beneath the presidential box. The confrontation erupted right before kickoff as manager Alvaro Arbeloa's squad lined up for pre-match handshakes. Angry fans displayed protest banners reading "Florentino, go now" and "Florentino, guilty," which stadium

security staff quickly confiscated. The tension follows a recent press conference where Perez announced upcoming leadership elections while insisting he is not a dictator.

The club's top management was not the only target of the crowd's wrath. Real Madrid players faced a monumental whistling campaign the moment they stepped out for warm-ups. Superstars Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Junior were heavily booed, with fans jeering the Brazilian winger every single time he touched the football.

Supporters are furious after a disastrous, trophyless campaign that included a disappointing UEFA Champions League quarterfinal exit. While Real Madrid currently sits second in the league standings with 80 points, the achievement feels completely futile. Their fierce arch-rivals, Barcelona, have already mathematically secured back-to-back La Liga championships. Compounding the drama, Perez recently claimed his relationship with Barcelona is completely broken, openly accusing them of paying off referees for nearly two decades.

# Federation Cup acts as Asian selection ground

**NEW DELHI**

India's aspiring young track and field stars have a massive opportunity ahead of them this month. The upcoming Federation Cup National Senior Athletics Competition will not just be about winning national glory, but will also serve as the official selection ground for a major international tournament. The national athletics federation announced that performances at the four-day event, scheduled to take place from May 22 to 25 in Ranchi, will determine who gets to represent the country on the continental stage. Specifically, the event will act as the selection trial for the highly anticipated, inaugural edition of the Asian U23 Athletics Championships.

According to the official guidelines released by the Asian Athletics Association, the eligibility criteria for the trials are strictly age-dependent. Young athletes who fall between the ages of 20 and 22 as of December 31, 2026, will be eligible to stake their claim for a spot in the national squad. This gives India's brightest young prospects a clear target to aim for as they fine-tune their preparations for the Ranchi meet. The stakes are incredibly high, as those who successfully make the cut will earn the honor of traveling to China.

# Theegala shines early at tough PGA championship

**NEWTOWN SQUARE**

Indian-American golfer Sahith Theegala made a brilliant start at the 2026 PGA Championship, putting himself right in the thick of the action. Playing at the challenging Aronimink Golf Club, he carded a steady two-under-par 68 to finish the opening day just one shot behind the tournament leaders.

It was a grueling day for the world's best players, as tough course conditions made scoring incredibly difficult and forced several top stars to stumble. In contrast, Theegala showed remarkable focus and discipline. His calm approach helped him navigate the tricky greens, keeping him safe from the errors that ruined the scorecards of his rivals.

As the first round wrapped up, the top of the leaderboard looked packed and highly competitive. A group of seven players tied for the lead at three-under-par 67. This powerful pack is led by the defending champion and world number one, Scottie Scheffler, who showed exactly why he is the man to beat this week.

Joining Scheffler at the top are experienced champions and exciting new talents, including Martin Kaymer, Min Woo Lee, Stephan Jaeger, Ryo Hisatsune, Alex Smalley, and young South African star Aldrich Potgieter.

With so many skilled players crowded together at the top, the tournament is shaping up to be an absolute thriller. Theegala's strong start gives him a fantastic foundation, but he will need to maintain this high level of consistency to stay in the hunt for his first major title over the next three days.

# Sports Minister reviews India's Commonwealth Games preparations

**NEW DELHI**

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya held a high-level review meeting to check India's readiness for the upcoming 2026 Commonwealth Games. The major international event is scheduled to take place in Glasgow, Scotland, and the government wants to ensure everything runs perfectly.

The main goal of the meeting was to build strong coordination between different sports organizations and improve the support system for competing athletes. High-ranking officials from the Sports Ministry, the Sports Authority of India, and the Indian Olympic Association attended the discussion to map out the journey ahead.

During the session, Mandaviya looked closely at athlete training schedules, travel logistics, and player welfare. He emphasized that the government is fully committed to giving Indian athletes every resource they need to perform at their absolute best on the global stage. He also stressed that early planning and smooth teamwork between agencies are vital for a successful campaign.

Interestingly, the meeting also focused on the closing ceremony in Glasgow. That moment will be historic for India, as the country will officially receive the hosting baton for the 2030 Commonwealth Games, which are set to be held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

# Sreejesh questions new role after coaching exit

**NEW DELHI**

Legendary Indian goalkeeper PR Sreejesh has openly criticized Hockey India's coaching structure, raising serious concerns over its transparency and heavy reliance on foreign staff. His comments come amid a public dispute following his exit as the junior men's head coach.

Taking to social media, Sreejesh revealed that Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey offered him a role with a new "development team." However, the two-time Olympic bronze medalist claimed the federation failed to answer basic questions regarding the program's structure, player pool, or tournament roadmap. He also questioned if moving from chief coach to goalkeeper coach was a promotion or a demotion.

"After winning a Junior World Cup bronze as chief coach, making me a goalkeeper coach again, is that a promotion or a demotion?" Sreejesh asked.

The veteran highlighted that across four national teams, Hockey India employs six foreign coaches, three foreign fitness experts, and various overseas support staff. In contrast, only one Indian coach is assigned per team. Sreejesh also questioned why domestic greats like Sardar Singh and Rani Rampal are continuously overlooked for top roles due to a perceived lack of experience.

The friction intensified after Tirkey denied firing Sreejesh, claiming his contract simply ended in December 2025 before Frenchman Frederic Soyez was hired. Sreejesh strongly rejected this narrative. He emphasized that under his eighteen-month leadership, the junior national team secured five podium finishes in five tournaments, proving that Indian coaches are fully capable of delivering world-class results.

# MAX VERSTAPPEN SET FOR 24H NÜRBURGRING DEBUT

**NEW DELHI**

Four-time Formula 1 World Champion Max Verstappen is gearing up for a brand-new career challenge. The racing icon will compete in his first-ever 24-hour endurance race at the prestigious 24H Nürburgring in Germany, scheduled for May 16 and 17.

Verstappen will tackle the iconic Nürburgring Nordschleife, a notoriously treacherous track nicknamed "The Green Hell." Known for dramatic weather shifts, intense multi-class traffic, and high-speed driving in total darkness, the grueling 24-hour event requires drivers to share duties in teams of three or four.

The spectacular festival has attracted over 161 teams and 450 drivers. Verstappen is set to compete in the premier 'SP9' class, piloting a high-performance Mercedes-AMG GT3 for his own banner, Mercedes-AMG Team Verstappen Racing. The Dutchman will share the wheel with elite co-drivers Dani Juncadella of Spain, Lucas Auer of Austria, and Jules Gounon of France.

Expressing his immense excitement, Verstappen revealed that the historic event has topped his personal bucket list for a very long time. He noted that while the high-speed track poses undeniable real-world risks, he is thrilled to embrace the challenge, especially pushing the car to its absolute limits during the night stint.

Backed by prominent support from Red Bull and Mercedes-AMG Motorsport, Verstappen is incredibly clear about his team's ultimate ambitions. He stated that success simply means winning, and despite the brutal competition, the entire group is entirely focused on maximizing their preparation to lift the ultimate trophy.

# Outer Delhi Warriors launch Under-15 championship

**NEW DELHI**

Outer Delhi Warriors, a prominent franchise in the Delhi Premier League (DPL), has officially announced the inaugural Krishna Apra Future Star Under-15 Championship. The franchise-led grassroots T20 tournament aims to discover and nurture the next generation of cricketing talent across the Delhi NCR region.

The tournament is scheduled to take place at the Jamia Millia Islamia grounds in New Delhi from June 20 to June 27, 2026. Ahead of the main event, open selection trials will be held later this month, culminating in a live player auction. To maximize visibility for the young athletes, the entire tournament showcase will be broadcast on a popular streaming platform.

To boost the tournament's profile, the franchise has appointed two former Indian cricketers as brand ambassadors:

- Parthiv Patel: The former wicketkeeper-batter brings valuable franchise mentoring experience from his stint with the IPL's Gujarat Titans.
- Aakash Chopra: The cricketer-turned-broadcaster will serve as the chief and global face of the tournament.

The championship's management team will also include Sanjay Rawat as Tournament Secretary and former National Cricket Academy (NCA) Director Navnati Dinesh as League Observer to ensure professional execution.

The tournament will mirror a senior professional league structure. Following the open trials and auction, 200 selected players will be divided among eight franchises. The teams will compete in 15 league matches split across two groups, followed by the semi-finals and a grand final.

The top performers of the championship will earn direct entry into the Outer Delhi Warriors Academy Training Programme, establishing a development pipeline that offers professional mentorship from senior cricketers, performance support, and holistic player development.

# Seamus Coleman to leave Everton after 17 years

**LIVERPOOL**

Club captain Seamus Coleman will officially leave Everton at the end of the season when his contract expires, bringing a legendary seventeen-year career to a close. The Premier League club made the emotional announcement, marking the end of an era for the historic Merseyside team.

The 37-year-old Irish right-back originally joined the Toffees from Sligo Rovers back in January 2009 for a bargain fee. Over nearly two decades, he established himself as a club icon, eventually setting the all-time Everton record for the most Premier League appearances, with 372 matches out of 433 total games.

In an official statement, Coleman expressed his deep gratitude to the fanbase, explaining that achieving the appearance record and captaining the team for 140 games went far beyond his wildest childhood dreams. He noted that he always tried his absolute best to put the interests of the football club first.

Unfortunately, severe injuries have heavily restricted the defender's playing time over recent years.

## QUICK READ

### Rupee weakens as crude oil prices surge

**NEW DELHI**

The Indian rupee fell below the 96-mark against the US dollar due to rising crude oil prices and ongoing global tensions linked to Iran. The currency opened at 95.86 and slipped further during early trade after touching a record low in the previous session. Pressure increased after oil companies raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre. Experts said high energy import costs have weakened the rupee in recent weeks. Despite the currency decline, Indian stock markets remained strong, while global crude oil prices crossed the 100-dollar-per-barrel level amid growing geopolitical concerns worldwide.

### Jain irrigation shares fall after quarterly loss

**MUMBAI**

Jain Irrigation Systems reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 19 crore in the fourth quarter of FY26, compared to a profit last year. Following the results, the company's shares dropped more than five per cent. Despite the loss, revenue increased to Rs 1,824 crore, while EBITDA and profit margins also improved. The company said exceptional items, tax adjustments, and finance cost changes affected earnings. Its Hi-Tech Agri business remained the main growth driver during the quarter. For the full financial year, the company posted a net loss of Rs 40 crore despite higher annual revenue and stronger adjusted profit growth.

### New Climate tool strengthens India's disaster preparedness

**NEW DELHI**

IIT Roorkee researchers have launched INDRA-CMIP6, a free high-resolution climate dataset designed to improve disaster preparedness and climate planning across India Published in Scientific Data, the project offers daily rainfall and temperature forecasts at nearly 10-kilometre resolution Scientists said existing global climate models often miss India's diverse geography, monsoon behaviour, and extreme weather patterns The new dataset uses information from 14 global climate models and improves predictions of floods, heatwaves, and rainfall extremes Researchers believe the tool will help planners, farmers, and policymakers prepare better climate adaptation strategies and strengthen regional resilience against future climate risks.

# India to champion robust natural diamond sector

India committed to boosting global diamond credibility and transparency at the Mumbai Kimberley Process meeting chaired by the nation.

**MUMBAI**

India has officially reaffirmed its strong commitment to boosting credibility, compliance, and consumer confidence within the global natural diamond sector. The announcement came as the high-profile meeting which was successfully concluded in Mumbai under India's chairship.

The intense four-day event brought together global participants, international observers, industry stakeholders, and civil society organizations. The delegates focused heavily on advancing vital discussions regarding market monitoring, technical trade processes, governance, statistical data, and artisanal diamond production. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the sessions maintained a sustained focus on strengthening transparency and reinforcing trust across the value chain.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal highlighted India's unique responsibility as the world's leading hub for diamond cutting and polishing. He emphasized that the natural diamond sector sustains millions of livelihoods globally, from producing nations to final consumers. Goyal stated that India will continue to champion a framework that remains robust and highly responsive to evolving consumer expectations.

Additionally, Kimberley Process Chair Suchindra Misra emphasized that trust remains the absolute foundation of the natural diamond trade. The meeting concluded with a strong push to enhance public outreach, helping to convey the positive impact of responsible sourcing to everyday buyers.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme is a global initiative established under a United Nations General Assembly Resolution. Its primary goal is to prevent conflict diamonds from entering legitimate trade networks while actively promoting responsible sourcing across the entire international supply chain.

# PM Modi's UAE visit clinches mega deals

**PM Modi's UAE visit secured historic defense, energy, and $5 billion investment pacts, boosting Indian infrastructure while launching a five-nation European and Middle Eastern tour.**

**NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile visit to the United Arab Emirates resulted in historic agreements. The two nations signed key pacts to strengthen their strategic defense partnership, secure energy supplies, and inject a massive five billion dollars into India's economy.

The financial package will boost Indian infrastructure, RBL Bank, and Samman Capital. Additionally, both countries agreed to build a major ship repair cluster at Vadinar. On the energy front, the deals focus heavily on securing a steady supply of LPG and expanding strategic petroleum reserves.During delegation-level talks in Abu Dhabi, Prime Minister Modi assured UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan that India stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the UAE in every situation. Amid rising global tensions, Modi emphasized that their strategic cooperation has vastly increased in importance. He also stressed the global impact of the conflict in West Asia, noting that dialogue and diplomacy remain the best path forward. He added that the vital Strait of Hormuz must remain free and open. The leaders noted that bilateral relations have upgraded rapidly since the UAE President's visit to India in January. PM Modi thanked the President for taking their comprehensive strategic partnership to new heights, promising joint progress across all sectors.

## Consumer complaints prompt FSSAI notice to Blinkit

**NEW DELHI**

India's apex food safety regulator, the FSSAI, has served an official notice to quick-commerce major Blinkit following widespread consumer complaints regarding the quality of eggs sold on its platform.According to internal sources, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) stepped in after multiple alarming posts circulated across social media platforms. Customers reported receiving eggs that were intensely foul-smelling, unusually rubbery in texture, and possessed "plastic-like" physical characteristics. Due to these anomalies, the food safety watchdog deemed the items completely unfit for human consumption.

*India's consumer watchdog fined Motion Education and Career Line Coaching fifteen lakh rupees for publishing misleading exam success advertisements.*

## Misleading IIT-JEE ads draw heavy financial penalties

**NEW DELHI**

India's consumer watchdog has cracked down on deceptive marketing practices in the education sector. The Central Consumer Protection Authority imposed heavy financial penalties on two prominent coaching institutes, Motion Education Private Limited and Career Line Coaching, for publishing misleading advertisements.

The authority fined Motion Education ten lakh rupees and hit Sikar-based Career Line Coaching with a five lakh rupee penalty. Officials discovered that both centers made exaggerated success claims regarding competitive IIT-JEE and NEET examinations. Crucially, they intentionally hid whether their top-ranking students were actually enrolled in expensive, full-time classroom courses or just brief test series.An in-depth investigation revealed that a majority of the successful students featured by Motion Education were part of a free online program rather than their paid residential tracks. Shockingly, the probe also found that some toppers only joined the institute after their exams were completely finished, yet the center claimed credit for their hard work without parental consent.

Similarly, Career Line Coaching came under fire for boasting about high selection numbers while hiding the fact that many achievers merely took cheap mock tests. The institute also gave conflicting statements to investigators about their actual annual results, rendering their promotional claims completely untruthful.Led by Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare, the authority ordered both institutes to immediately halt these unfair trade practices and provide honest disclosures moving forward. In response to the strict penalties, both coaching companies have officially challenged the consumer watchdog's final orders before the National Commission.

### India's ethanol capacity reaches 2,000 Cr liters

**NEW DELHI**

India's ethanol production capacity has skyrocketed to nearly 2,000 crore liters, significantly outstripping current domestic demand. A new report reveals that while capacity continues to expand rapidly, the market's ability to absorb the biofuel has hit a visible bottleneck.Currently, the required ethanol volume to meet the national E20 blending target stands at roughly 1,100 crore liters, alongside an additional 350 crore liters for non-fuel industrial use. Because the market only absorbs about 60 percent of what is offered, production plants face intense utilization pressures. Consequently, the industry is entering a consolidation phase, with factory operations expected.

# ADANI ELECTRICITY URGES WISE SUMMER POWER USE

**AHMEDABAD**

Adani Electricity urged consumers to use power judiciously during the ongoing summer season. The company warned that heavily relying on cooling appliances could cause sudden spikes in electricity consumption, inadvertently pushing households into much more expensive tariff slabs. As intense heat waves sweep across the region, households naturally increase their usage of air conditioners, refrigerators, and fans. The utility provider emphasized that making mindful choices can dramatically lower monthly expenses while simultaneously supporting environmental sustainability. To keep bills under control, the company recommended optimizing air conditioner settings by keeping temperatures around 24 degrees Celsius. Using ceiling fans alongside air conditioning can also maximize overall cooling efficiency. Additionally, residents should utilize programmable thermostats and upgrade to appliances boasting high energy-efficiency ratings. The statement also focused on simple, cost-free lifestyle habits. Adani Electricity advised opening windows during cooler mornings and evenings to enhance natural cross-ventilation, while drawing curtains during the hottest afternoon hours to block direct sunlight. Furthermore, the company highlighted the hidden costs of "phantom" energy. Many modern electronic devices and chargers continue to draw power even when switched completely off, so completely unplugging them is highly recommended. An official spokesperson for the Adani Group company reiterated that small behavioral changes can add up to significant financial savings over time.

## Maharashtra slashes jet fuel tax to 7%

**MUMBAI**

The Maharashtra government announced a major reduction in value-added tax on aviation turbine fuel, dropping the rate to 7 percent from 18 percent. This emergency fiscal move aims to provide immediate financial relief to airlines struggling under the weight of soaring global fuel prices and heavy operational costs.

According to an official notification from the state finance department, the revised tax rate took effect immediately on May 15. The tax holiday will remain active for exactly six months, wrapping up on November 14, 2026. This significant eleven-percentage-point cut is expected to dramatically lower refueling expenses for carriers operating across the state.

Jet fuel stands as the single largest expenditure for Indian aviation companies, routinely swallowing nearly 35 to 40 percent of their entire operational budget. Currently, domestic airlines are facing immense financial pressure due to rising global crude oil prices, extended flight paths, and sudden airspace closures linked closely to ongoing geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East.

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu praised the timely intervention, thanking the Maharashtra government for supporting the struggling industry. The ministry has been actively holding high-level meetings with several heavily taxed states, including West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi, to push for similar tax relief.

By aggressively slashing these rates, Maharashtra has made its primary airports in Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur vastly more competitive. For comparison, Delhi currently charges a steep 25 percent tax on jet fuel, while Tamil Nadu levies 29 percent.

## Portuguese firm to manufacture Indian AI drone

**NEW DELHI**

In a major boost to India's defense export ambitions, indigenous AI warfare company FWDA announced a landmark manufacturing deal.

Its flagship autonomous combat aircraft, "Kaal Bhairava," will soon be produced in Europe through a strategic partnership with Portuguese defense firm SKETCHPIXEL.

This collaboration marks a historic milestone for India's domestic tech ecosystem. Kaal Bhairava is officially one of the first Indian-designed AI combat platforms to enter the European manufacturing network. SKETCHPIXEL, famous for creating advanced fighter jet simulators for aircraft like the F-16, will provide crucial simulation technologies, AI integration systems, and NATO-compatible communications infrastructure.

**INDIANOIL'S ECO-SHUTTLES**

# *IndianOil and DMRC launch clean hydrogen buses*

**NEW DELHI**

Indian Oil Corporation Limited and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation have introduced cutting-edge hydrogen-powered buses in the national capital. This landmark joint initiative marks a significant leap forward in promoting clean, sustainable, and eco-friendly urban public transportation across India.

IndianOil Refineries Director Arvind Kumar announced that the two newly deployed hydrogen fuel cell buses will operate smoothly between Central Secretariat and Kartavya Bhavan. Crucially, the green hydrogen powering these vehicles is produced directly at IndianOil's specialized research and development center located in Faridabad. Because these advanced fuel cells rely entirely on hydrogen, the vehicles emit nothing but water vapor, creating a completely pollution-free transit option.

Part of India's 1st Green Hydrogen Bus Fleet with Zero Emission
Enabling Last Mile Connectivity to Kartavya
HYDROGEN FUEL CELL BUS BY INDIANOIL TO DMRC
HYDROGEN BUS
HK38AG7810

While only two shuttle buses are running in this initial phase, IndianOil is actively working to scale up its green hydrogen capabilities. The company is currently fabricating a massive ten-kiloton green hydrogen facility at its Panipat refinery, which will eventually support wider commercial transit networks as the economics of the technology mature. Additionally, IndianOil is running trials with fifteen other hydrogen vehicles nationwide.

The clean energy push aligns seamlessly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeals for the nation to adopt low-carbon technologies to mitigate global crude oil supply uncertainties. With India currently importing eighty-nine percent of its crude oil requirements, shifting toward domestic green hydrogen is vital for long-term energy security. Kumar reassured the public that despite volatile global fuel markets, all ten IndianOil refineries remain highly stable and are operating at over one hundred percent capacity.

## Coal ministry partners to expand mineral inventory

**NEW DELHI**

In a major step toward national self-reliance, two of India's premier exploration agencies have joined forces. The Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding to significantly boost coal and mineral exploration across the country.The strategic agreement was finalized during a high-level review meeting chaired by Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey in Ranchi. According to the Ministry of Coal, the partnership aims to expand the national inventory of both energy and non-energy minerals. By combining their expertise, the two organizations will accelerate the discovery and development of new mines, advancing the vision of an independent, self-reliant India.During the meeting, Minister Dubey praised the operational performance of the mining bodies but stressed the urgent need to focus on clean coal technologies and the strategic exploration of critical minerals.

# Ravi Shastri: Sanju Samson is the future T20 captain

Ravi Shastri backs Sanju Samson for India's T20 captaincy following his spectacular Player of the Tournament World Cup performance

**NEW DELHI**

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri believes star batter Sanju Samson has what it takes to lead the national T20 team in the future. Shastri praised the wicketkeeper's growing maturity, stating that his excellent performances have made him a top candidate for the captain's role.

India recently won the T20 World Cup at home under Suryakumar Yadav. Samson played a massive part in that victory, even winning the Player of the Tournament award for his crucial, match-winning knocks. Shastri thinks this success is just the beginning of a bright leadership journey for the 31-year-old over the next few years.

"India might look for a new captain by the 2028 World Cup," Shastri said during a review. He noted that Samson is a permanent fixture at the top of the batting order and has plenty of experience leading the Rajasthan Royals in the IPL for five seasons.

In the past, critics often questioned Samson's consistency despite his obvious talent. However, Shastri feels those doubts are now completely gone. Samson recently smashed three consecutive half-centuries during the World Cup, proving he can handle high-pressure situations.

Shastri added that Samson single-handedly turned big games around for India in the tournament's crucial knockout stages. Combined with his current stellar form in the IPL, Shastri insists that Samson has silenced his critics for good and earned his spot as a future leader of the Indian cricket team.

# Brad Haddin confident of Punjab's playoff chances

**DHARAMSHALA**

**Despite a fifth straight loss, Coach Brad Haddin insists Punjab Kings can still reach the playoffs by winning their remaining two crucial matches**

Despite suffering a fifth straight loss against Mumbai Indians, Punjab Kings (PBKS) assistant coach Brad Haddin believes the team can still reach the playoffs. He stressed that their tournament destiny remains completely in their own hands with two games left.

Punjab recovered well from a mid-innings collapse to score a strong 200/8, thanks to their lower-order batters. Even though Mumbai chased the target with just one ball remaining, Punjab stays in fourth place with 13 points in a tight playoff race.

"Our destiny is still in our hands," Haddin said after the game. He made it clear that there is no room for error now, and the equation is simple, Punjab must win their remaining matches.

Haddin praised his team for setting a high total but credited Mumbai's Tilak Varma for playing a special, match-winning innings. He admitted that the dressing room was hurting after the close defeat, but noted that pressure is exactly what makes the IPL exciting.

The coach also pointed out that T20 cricket has changed, meaning a score of 200 is no longer enough to scare chasing teams. He emphasized that the squad has full faith in its players and needs to rediscover the winning form they showed early in the season. Punjab Kings will play their final home match in Dharamshala against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on May 17.

# Punjab Kings Must Reset For Playoff Push

**NEW DELHI**

Former South African cricketer Mark Boucher believes Punjab Kings (PBKS) face a massive mental challenge after their heartbreaking loss to Mumbai Indians. He has urged the struggling franchise to forget about qualification math and play fearless cricket in their remaining must-win matches. Punjab suffered their fifth consecutive defeat in Dharamshala, failing to defend a strong total of 200/8. Despite starting the season beautifully, their playoff hopes are now hanging by a thread. Boucher suggested that constantly worrying about reaching the top four might be putting too much extra pressure on the players.

"They need to reset mentally," Boucher stated during an interview. He explained that shifting away from qualification scenarios and adopting a nothing-to-lose attitude could free up the squad. He noted that IPL momentum shifts incredibly fast, and losing streaks often happen due to small, missed opportunities.

In the match, Prabhsimran Singh's fluent 57 and Azmatullah Omarzai's quickfire 38 helped Punjab post a competitive score. However, Mumbai chased it down with one ball left, powered by Tilak Varma's unbeaten 75.

Boucher pointed out that fine margins and pressure moments swung the game. He specifically blamed an expensive over from Marco Jansen as the major turning point. Jansen bowled too full and wide on a surface where hard, back-of-a-length deliveries were the toughest to hit, releasing all the pressure built by spinner Yuzvendra Chahal. Punjab must now win their final league games to stay alive.

# BUMRAH STEPS UP AS STAND-IN MI CAPTAIN

**DHARAMSHALA**

Mumbai Indians (MI) stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah shared a light-hearted joke about his captaincy journey across cricket formats after leading his team to a thrilling six-wicket victory over Punjab Kings (PBKS) in the ongoing IPL.

With regular captain Hardik Pandya recovering from back spasms and vice-captain Suryakumar Yadav out due to personal reasons, Bumrah made a successful IPL captaincy debut. Reflecting on his leadership experience, the ace speedster jokingly remarked that only the Indian ODI captaincy is left on his resume now, though he finds that unlikely to happen.

"I have captained a Test match, I have captained T20Is, and now the only game left is ODI cricket," Bumrah said with a smile during the post-match presentation. "But I don't see that happening. Jokes apart, I am very happy and enjoyed my time."

Turning his focus to the game, Bumrah praised his team's execution on a dry Dharamsala pitch. He commended the bowlers for keeping their nerve and holding a consistent length. He also highlighted Tilak Varma's spectacular, match-winning knock of 75 runs off just 33 balls, alongside explosive support from English batter Will Jacks and a disciplined bowling spell by Shardul Thakur.

# Ravichandran Ashwin defends Hardik Pandya over Mumbai's slump

**NEW DELHI**

Veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has defended Mumbai Indians (MI) captain Hardik Pandya, stating it is unfair to blame him alone for the team's poor IPL 2026 season. Mumbai has won just four out of twelve matches and is already out of the playoff race.

Ashwin emphasized that the entire squad failed to perform, making it unreasonable to target the captain. He reminded critics that Pandya successfully led Gujarat Titans to a title and a runners-up finish, proving his strong leadership skills.

Replacing a legendary captain like Rohit Sharma, who won multiple IPL trophies and a World Cup, brought immense pressure and social media backlash. Ashwin noted that handling such massive fandom requires a thick skin. He added that Mumbai's bowling leaked heavy runs, giving the captain very little control on the field.

Pandya has faced a tough season, scoring only 146 runs and taking four wickets while battling form and fitness issues. Ashwin expressed concern over Pandya's batting timing, wondering if a hidden physical injury, like a back problem or tennis elbow, was causing him to miss deliveries he usually hits out of the park.

Despite these struggles, Ashwin labeled Pandya a once-in-a-generation player and a vital linchpin for Indian cricket. Other star players like Suryakumar Yadav and Jasprit Bumrah also had quiet seasons, and both had to lead the side when Pandya missed three games due to injury. Ashwin concluded that one bad season is acceptable after Pandya's previous international success.

## INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2026...

Lucknow Super Giants beat Chennai Super Kings by 7 wickets at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana International Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Friday

**INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE STANDINGS**

| TEAM | M | W | L | Pts | NRR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) | 12 | 8 | 4 | 16 | +1.065 |
| Gujarat Titans (GT) | 12 | 8 | 4 | 16 | +0.551 |
| Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) | 12 | 7 | 5 | 14 | +0.331 |
| Punjab Kings (PBKS) | 12 | 6 | 5 | 13 | +0.355 |
| Rajasthan Royals (RR) | 11 | 6 | 5 | 12 | +0.082 |
| Chennai Super Kings (CSK | 12 | 6 | 6 | 12 | +0.027 |
| Delhi Capitals (DC) | 12 | 5 | 7 | 10 | -0.993 |
| Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) | 10 | 4 | 5 | 9 | -0.169 |
| Mumbai Indians (MI) | 11 | 4 | 8 | 8 | -0.504 |
| Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) | 12 | 4 | 8 | 8 | -0.714 |

# Defying critics, Bengaluru lifts maiden IPL trophy

**NEW DELHI**

Indian batting maestro Virat Kohli revealed that finally winning the IPL trophy with Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) was the most emotional moment of his career. He expressed immense gratitude for experiencing the triumph before retiring from the game.

Kohli described the overwhelming feeling of dropping to his knees in prayer when the team ended its painful 18-year wait for the title. Bengaluru lifted their maiden trophy by defeating Punjab Kings in the final at Ahmedabad. Having been with the franchise since 2008, Kohli explained that years of heartbreaking near-misses made the eventual victory deeply meaningful.

"It is difficult to explain the emotions of those final moments," Kohli admitted. He noted that living through the immense pressure season after season, while critics labeled RCB as a big team that could never win, was incredibly tough.

The 37-year-old confessed that while he would not have spent his life in regret without a trophy, he always wondered what reaching the pinnacle would feel like. He believes the long delay actually amplified their joy. Winning early in his career would not have given him even a fraction of the satisfaction he felt after enduring so much collective struggle.

Currently, Kohli is in spectacular form, smashing 484 runs in 12 matches during the ongoing IPL 2026 season. His powerful batting displays have propelled Bengaluru to the top of the points table as they confidently bid to defend their championship title.

# Injured Jamie Overton Ruled Out Of IPL

**NEW DELHI**

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) all-rounder Jamie Overton expressed immense heartbreak after a right thigh injury officially ruled him out of the remainder of the IPL 2026 season. The England cricketer has already returned home to the United Kingdom for medical scans.

Overton shared his disappointment at leaving the five-time champions during such a crucial phase of the tournament. He thanked the passionate CSK fans for their incredible love and support, adding that he is already looking forward to returning next year. The Ruturaj Gaikwad-led franchise has named Dian Forrester as his replacement.

Overton's sudden departure adds to Chennai's massive injury crisis. The team is already missing key players like Nathan Ellis, Khaleel Ahmed, and legendary wicketkeeper MS Dhoni, who is sidelined with a calf injury.

Losing Overton is a severe blow to the squad's balance. He was CSK's second-highest wicket-taker this season, claiming 14 wickets at an impressive average of 17.78. He even won the Player of the Match award on May 11 after taking 3-36 in Chennai's thrilling victory over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG). Beyond his reliable seam bowling, his explosive power-hitting lower down the order rescued the team multiple times.

**City Hilights (English Daily) published by P. Sunil Kumar (Publisher) on behalf of Immaculate Broadcasting Consortium World News (P) Ltd.,** No. 18, JRV Court, Queens's Road, Bengaluru – 560001 and printed at Vihaan Media #85/J, Industrial suburb 2nd stage, Yeshwantpur Extension,Bangalore-560022, Printed at No-7/2 plot no.CA-3/1,28(p)&29(p) Kapanoor 2nd Stage Industrial Area Kapnoor Village Kalaburagi -585104. Printed at S. J. R. V. Printers, No. 208 Plot No. B-019 KSSIDC Industrial Area, Irfan Ahamed Khan Pathan, 4th Main Road Gamanagatti, Hubballi-Dharwad – 580025. and Elegant Offset Printers Pvt. Ltd. No. 5-61/1, Shed No. M-6, Yeyyadi Industrial Estate, Yeyyadi, Mangalore - 575 008. (RNI No: KARENG / 2015 / 63243), Regd. No. BGGPO-2581/2017-2019 Posted at Bengaluru PSO-560026 Email - cityhilights.news@gmail.com Phone: 080-41209042. Copyright. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.